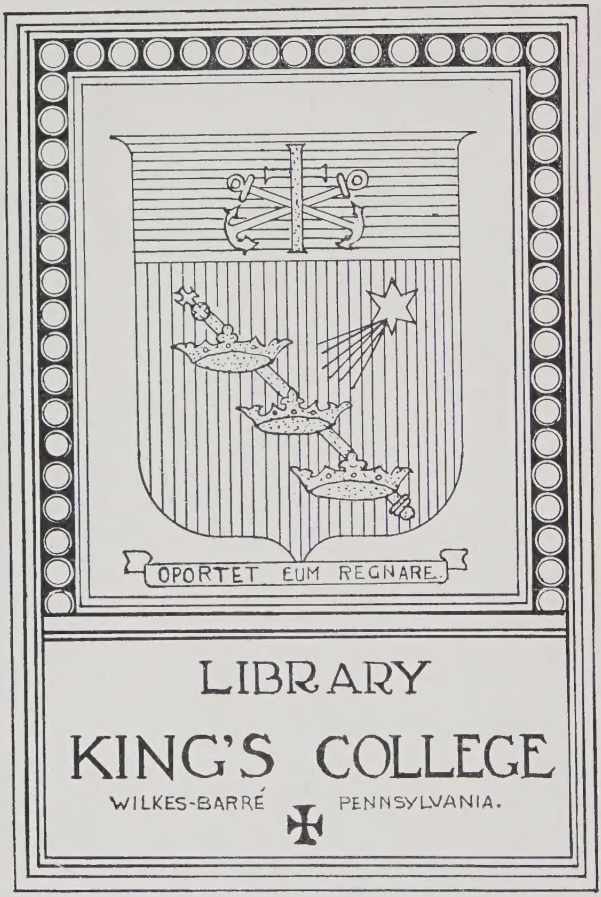
PAST AND PRESENT

A COLLECTION OF JEWISH ESSAYS

I. FRIEDLAENDER



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WITHDRAWN

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A COLLECTION OF JEWISH ESSAYS

BY

ISRAEL FRIEDLAENDER

CINCINNATI

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1919

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To

HERBERT BENTWICH, ESQ.,

A FAITHFUL LOVER OF ZION AND A VALIANT
CHAMPION OF ZION'S IDEALS,
THIS VOLUME
IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

The collection of essays presented herewith to the public consists of a number of articles and addresses which I have written or delivered during the last twenty years—since 1899 when, as a young student, I entered literary and public life. They are intended for the general reader, although it is hoped that they may not prove altogether valueless to the specialist.

However, the volume represents not only a collection but also a selection. I have rigidly excluded everything that I thought was of merely passing interest at the time it was written, or that I did not consider sufficiently popular, either in subject-matter or in form of presentation, to appeal to the intelligent layman. In one or two instances I found myself compelled to substantiate my theses by a few technical references. I have put these references in small type, in the hope that they will not obtrude themselves upon the reader, and, like the proverbial good children, will be seen and not heard.

Three of the essays ("The Hebrew Language," "The Messianic Idea in Islam," and "Maimonides as a Master of Style") were originally written in German and translated by the author for the present volume.

Two of the essays ("Were Our Ancestors Capable of Self-Government?" and "A New Specimen of Modern Biblical Exegesis") are polemical in character. The former is a rejoinder to an article attacking Zionism on the basis of alleged historical facts; the latter

is a review of a bulky commentary which represents the most radical type of modern Biblical criticism. It is needless for me to say that, in spite of their polemical tone, the essays are free from all personal animosity; as a matter of fact, neither of the authors against whom they were directed were personally known to me at the time of writing. Nevertheless, I felt considerable hesitation before embodying these essays in this volume. But the importance and timeliness of the issues discussed in them made me ultimately decide on their inclusion. In republishing these two essays here I have omitted in one of them the name of the writer whose arguments I endeavored to refute; in the case of the other essay it was unfortunately impossible for me to do so, without destroying its entire literary structure, but the unbiased reader will find that the tone, though sharply polemical, is free from personal acrimony.

All the essays collected in the present volume, with the exception of two ("The International Zionist Congress," and "Palestine and the World War"), which are printed here for the first time, originally appeared in various periodical publications, and are reproduced here with the permission of the editors.

The essays have been carefully revised for the present edition, though the revision has been limited to language and style. I did not consider myself at liberty to change the content. Where such changes became unavoidable, they were marked in the footnotes and placed in square brackets. It was a source of gratification to me to find that the views expressed in my earliest essays, nearly two decades ago, are

substantially the same which are advocated in my latest articles.

I have entitled this volume "Past and Present" in order to indicate the two-fold character of its subject-matter, dealing as it does with various phases of the Jewish past, on the one hand, and with numerous problems of the Jewish present, on the other. At the same time the title is intended to convey the fundamental tendency of these essays, *viz.*, to interpret the events of the past in the light of the present, and the problems of the present in the light of the past. I have written neither as an archeologist, with his eye riveted on the past, nor as a journalist, with his horizon limited to the present, but rather as an historian—in that sense in which the ancient Romans called history *Magistra Vitae*, "The Teacher of Life." Nowhere is this historical method of approach more applicable and, indeed, more imperative than it is in the case of the Jews, in whose life the past and the present are inextricably bound up with one another.

While the diversity of subjects treated in this volume is undoubtedly due—as it is in every collection of essays—to the personal equation of the author, representing the range of his literary and public interests, yet I venture to claim that the thoughtful reader will be able to detect the common bond which links all the essays together and transforms the apparently heterogeneous mass of material into one homogeneous whole. The volume is based upon the fundamental conception of Judaism as a living organism, which is one and indivisible at all times and in all climes; changing and yet unchanged;

harking back to a great past and struggling, in the midst of a harassing present, towards a glorious future. That conception views Israel as a community in which the religious and racial element is inseparably intertwined with one another, in which the universal ideals and the national aspirations form a harmonious combination—a combination which can be realized only through the untrammeled and unhindered development of the Jewish genius on a Jewish soil. It is essentially the ancient Messianic tenet of Judaism, which looks forward to the restoration of Israel as part of the restoration of the entire human race. It is, therefore, natural that Zionism, which is the modern successor of Messianism, should occupy a conspicuous place in this collection. The first essays in this volume deal with the Zionist ideal as formulated and preached by the prophets of Israel, and the last essays treat of the same ideal in its modern manifestations.

But while believing in Zionism as the ultimate consummation of Israel's hope, and his only safeguard against absorption in the whirlpool of humanity, the writer does not belong to those who champion "the denial of the *Golus*," and are willing to neglect or to sacrifice the bulk of the Jewish people outside of Palestine for the sake of a small minority who are to form the Jewish nucleus in Palestine. Basing his deductions upon acknowledged historical facts, he is convinced that, given the unifying and inspiring influence of a Jewish center in our ancient homeland, Jewish life in the Diaspora may be so shaped as to harmonize both with the age-long traditions of our

people and with the life of the nations in whose midst we dwell. It is for this reason that a number of essays have been included which are dedicated to the Jewish-Arabic period, for during that period Judaism and Islam exercised a profound influence on each other, and Jewish culture, while adapting itself successfully to the environment, was yet able to remain genuinely and distinctively Jewish.

The author, moreover, thoroughly shares the view, which is held and has frequently been expressed by many thinking Jews of Europe, that America is destined to become in the near future the leading Jewish center of the Diaspora, and that it is the duty of American Jewry to live up to the great obligation placed upon it by history. Hence, a number of essays are devoted to a discussion of Jewish problems in our own country. *Zionism plus Diaspora, Palestine plus America*—these formulas express in a nutshell the leading thoughts of the present volume.

A considerable number of essays embodied in this collection were originally public addresses delivered on various occasions. Some of them were reduced to writing after their delivery, and, therefore, cannot claim to be a faithful reproduction of the original public utterances. It is in view of this character of the volume that I venture to repeat at the entrance to this publication the plea, made in one of these addresses ("The Function of Jewish Learning in America"), in favor of the establishment of a proper and responsible agency for the public discussion of Jewish problems. Although this country affords a much wider scope and attaches much greater significance

to the platform in public life than is customary in Europe, we have as yet failed to create a medium of expression for public opinion, such as is to be found in practically all European centers of Jewry. In Russia there existed as far back as 1908 a Jewish Literary Society which maintained one hundred and twenty branches throughout that huge empire; in Germany there existed, and probably still exists, a vast net-work of Societies for Jewish History and Literature, which are centralized in a common "League"; and in England there is similarly to be found a Union of Jewish Literary Societies. If it be our desire to establish the Jewish platform in America on a proper basis, so that it may combine dignity with popularity, and an enlightened interest in the past with a practical insight into the present, it is absolutely essential that we create here a similar organization which will enable Jewish men of letters as well as Jewish men of affairs to discuss the problems of Jewish life and history on a high plane, and will give stability and permanency to the numerous public utterances regarding Jews and Judaism, which at present are entirely haphazard, and in most cases carry no weight whatsoever. The coming era of reconstruction, which is bound to affect American Jewry as it will the rest of humanity, ought to be particularly favorable to the realization of this plan, as of many other schemes, looking to the development and betterment of American Israel.

ISRAEL FRIEDLAENDER

New York, February 28th, 1919.

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I

THE POLITICAL IDEAL OF THE PROPHETS

A Study in Biblical Zionism*

OF the numerous obstructions which the human understanding encounters in its search for truth none perhaps are more troublesome than those which Francis Bacon, philosopher as well as politician, so quaintly designated as *idola fori*, "the idols of the market": "those namely which have entwined themselves around the understanding from the associations of words and names," and are "either the names of things which have no existence, or they are the names of actual objects, but confused, badly defined, and hastily and irregularly abstracted from things." As the subject of this paper will unavoidably lead me to speak of politics, politicians and things political, I must begin by earnestly entreating you to dismiss from your minds those unpleasant, nay, repulsive associations which have encrusted these words in our own times and surroundings, and to transfer your thoughts to the days of old when man was best defined as a "political animal," when

*Paper read in the Course of Public Lectures of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America on April 1, 1909. Published in the *Jewish Comment* on March 11, 1910. A Hebrew translation of this essay, prepared by the author, was published in the Hebrew monthly *Hatoren* in 1915 and reprinted in pamphlet form by the Hebrew Society "Ahieber" in New York.

"political" and "ideal' were not yet a contradiction, and when politics were rather the lever to lift man from the stupor and selfishness of animal existence to human virtue and self-sacrifice. If politics be inseparable from compromise-mongering and trading in convictions, then no greater insult to prophecy and no grosser misconception of its message could be possible than to associate it with politics. But if "politics" mean, what they originally meant, devotion to the commonwealth, and "politicians" designates those whose life and love are centered in the commonwealth, then we are fully justified in saying that the prophets of Israel were essentially politicians. True, the prophets were, as they declared to be, men of God. The communion with the Divine—to us a convenient phrase, to them an immediate reality—filled their thoughts, dictated their words, determined their actions. But the prophets of Israel were at the same time men of this world, deeply rooted in this earth, closely associated with their fellowmen, alien to nothing that is human. The prophets of our people had little sympathy with those who proclaimed "my kingdom is not of this world," and believed that the problems and perplexities of humanity could be solved by deserting humanity. The prophets of Israel were neither visionaries nor hermits. To them the Kingdom of Heaven was a kingdom on earth and the calling of preachers in the desert was essentially distasteful. Their place was in the midst of their nation, and even the high-strung prophet, who in a moment of despair longed for a lodging place in the

wilderness, to leave his people and to go from them,[1] clung passionately to it in all the crushing disasters that befell it.

And the higher prophecy rises, the loftier its aspirations, the more human becomes its appearance, the readier does it discard all external characteristics: the distinction of the class, the mannerisms of the school, the cant of the profession. The true prophet even resents the title of a prophet,[2] and he bitterly scorns the professional "men of God" who ostentatiously display the hairen mantle of prophecy in order to cheat.[3] The true prophet is a *ben Adam*, a "son of man," in the best human sense of the word: he is an affectionate husband, a loving father, a loyal citizen, a self-sacrificing patriot. But, while in external life in nothing distinguished from his fellowmen, the fountain from which his life springs, is essentially and fundamentally different: his *soul* is full of the spirit of the Lord,[4] and the Divine word is shut up in his bones as a scorching fire[5]—not that flickering harmless flame which lights the hearth, but that raging fire of God which splitteth the rock.[6]

For, while human and humane as long as the interests of man are concerned, the prophet becomes implacable and inhuman when these interests clash

[1]Jeremiah ix, 1.
[2]Amos vii, 14.
[3]Zechariah xiii, 4.
[4]Cf. Micah iii, 8, where the true prophet is contrasted with the false prophet.
[5]Jeremiah xx, 9.
[6]Ibidem xxiii, 29.

with those of God. The prophet is a man of reality, but he does not yield to reality. He is uncompromising, pitiless and regardless, ready to sacrifice everything and everybody, including himself, when his convictions are at stake. And, while an obedient member of society, when the latter in turn is obedient to his ideals, he fearlessly challenges society when it refuses to conform with his standards, and, with love of humanity in his heart, becomes a man of strife and a man of struggle to the whole earth.[1] It is this dualism, this constant attempt to bring down Heaven to earth and to force the human flesh into the mould of the Divine spirit, which constitutes the innermost essence, the struggle, the failure and the triumph of the prophets of Israel.

Thus the source of prophecy is divine, its end and means are human; proceeding from God, it addresses itself to man through human agencies for human purposes. This essentially human aspect of Jewish prophecy must be constantly borne in mind, if we wish to grasp the full meaning of what it stands for. It is this tendency which explains the great fact that the prophetic message, while purely religious as regards its sanction and stimulus, is in its contents neither metaphysical nor doctrinal, but of an essentially practical nature, that the great ideal of Holiness which forms the everlasting national aspiration of our people is emphasized by the prophets not in its theological but in its human aspect, and is transformed by them into the social, or ethical, ideal of Righteous-

[1]Jeremiah xv, 10.

ness. It finally accounts for the fact that the social ideal of righteousness, as formulated by the prophets, receives and unalterably retains a *political* form.

For a social ideal, as its attribute indicates, can only be realized in society. "Imagine a human being," observes a great Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages,[1] "living by himself, without any intercourse with his fellow-creatures. You will find that all ethical ideals are utterly useless to him and contribute in nothing toward the perfection of his character." Since human society is not a herd, but is of necessity organized, it follows that the ideal of righteousness can only be realized in organized society, *i. e.*, in a commonwealth, or a state. The prophets were well aware—and they untiringly and vehemently proclaimed it—that the State, like every other human institution, can be turned away from its purpose, and may become an instrument to combat righteousness. But the prophets were wise enough not to discard the use of a thing because of its possible misuse. They realized that the State, though far from perfection—as far from it as is any other human agency, —was yet the only and indispensable vehicle of carrying righteousness into life, and they set about to perfect it. They rightly believed that the social ideal depends for its realization as much on the State as does the State for its reason for existence on the social ideal. Hence the social ideal as realized in the body politic and the body politic as necessitated and uplifted by the social ideal constitutes the point of gravity in the message of the prophets.

[1] Maimonides, *More Nebukim* iii, 54.

What, then, was the political ideal of the prophets? What was the form and the tendency of the Jewish body politic as best fitted to realize and carry into effect the ideal of Holiness, and in what respect or respects did it differ from the ideal of the bulk of the people? In order to comprehend in its innermost significance the political ideal of the prophets and the incalculable issues it involved for the development of Israel and through it for that of mankind, we may be permitted to retrace our steps and to delve for a moment in "First Principles."

Every one of us, whether reared in the ideas of the American constitution, or whether imbued with the spirit of its prototype, the ancient consitution of our Torah, is "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." But while equality, in the sense of equal opportunity, is the indispensable condition of a healthy public life and its only salvation from tyranny, oppression and brutal force, it is just as certain, when taken as a statement of fact, that no two men were ever created equal. The fundamental law of nature is not equality but variety, and Leibniz expressed a lofty truth in simple words when he remarked that no two leaves were ever found to be truly equal. This variety, which is the basis and stepping stone of the harmony of the Cosmos, is the result of the process of differentiation, which becomes more and more accentuated, the higher we rise in the scale of nature, and reaches its culmination in man and human aggregates. Every form of existence in nature, be it an object, a man, or a nation, has its own distinct place in the Universe, which can truly be

filled only by itself—and by no other. As long as it fills the place destined for it, it has a *raison d'être* and must live. The more exceptional this place and the more important in the economy of the Universe, the stronger is its *raison d'être*, the greater its vitality. But when it is no more able or willing to fill its own true place, and is in consequence bound to encroach on others, then it has lost its reason for existence; it has become a mere duplication, which in nature is identical with waste, and it must inevitably disappear.

From the very moment when Israel stepped forth into the light of history it has stood out as a singularly marked national type. When yet scarcely lopped off from the common Semitic stock, it already felt itself to be distinct, not only from the kindred Semitic races, but also from the rest of mankind. This distinction is based on the fact that Israel is the people of God. Hence the higher the conception of God rises, the higher rises with it the distinction of Israel. With the moment when the God of the Universe, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, was identified with the national God of Israel, who brought it forth from the land of Egypt, Israel's distinction reached an unapproachable height and became undisputed supremacy. Israel is now indestructible, for his reason for existence is as everlasting as his God. Israel has become an indispensable part of the Universe and his existence an unalterable law of Nature.[1]

[1]Cf. Jeremiah xxxi, 34-36; see also xxxiii, 25-26.

But Israel is not only superior to all other nations; it altogether stands on a different level: it is *unique*; it is a nation *sui generis*. If the Lord is "Most High" above all gods, then His people Israel is, consistently enough, "most high" above all nations.[1] "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is *one*,"[2] is the logical premise to the declaration: "Who is like thee, O Israel, a nation *one* on earth?"[3] This distinction places Israel on a lofty unassailable platform, above and apart from all other nations. It involves complete isolation, an entirely separate existence, with separate standards and separate forms of life. Israel as the "people of God" can only lose through its contact with nations that "know not God;" it can only then remain true to its distinction when it is, as the ancient heathen seer declared it to be, "a nation dwelling by itself, and not counted among the people."[44]

Such was the idea of Israel's selection as conceived by the great minds of our people—arrogant, will say those who revel in the mathematics of the greatest happiness of the greatest number; sublime, will say others who calculate what humanity would have remained without it.

But what was the attitude of the bulk of the people toward this great idea of the supremacy of Israel? The people acted as they are always prone to act. They were ready to accept the goods, but unwilling to pay the price. From the manner in which Amos

[1]Cf. Deuteronomy xxvi, 19; xxviii, 1.
[2]Ibidem vi, 4.
[3]I Chronicles xvii, 21.
[4]Numbers xxiii, 9.

taunts the Ephraimites for styling themselves "the chief of the nations,"[1] or Ezekiel takes the Moabites and Edomites to task for saying: "Behold, the house of Judah hath now become like all other nations,"[2] as well as from the venomous hatred which all neighboring nationalities bore toward Israel, that deadly hatred with which mediocrity pursues superiority,—from these and other indications,[3] we may safely conclude that the belief in Israel's selection was deeply rooted in all classes of the Israelitish nation. But while eager to accept the claim of supremacy so flattering to its self-consciousness, the people refused to take upon itself the consequences of an isolated life involved in this supremacy. For nations are as gregarious as individuals, and "splendid isolation" may be splendid but by no means pleasant. Israel shivered on the lonesome summit assigned to it by Providence, and it longed to descend to less lofty but more habitable plains. It relinquished the unique but isolated post on which God had placed it, and was satisfied to hold one of the numerous subordinate positions occupied by other nationalities. It abandoned its *religious* supremacy, which was its reason for existence, and was glad to sink to the level of its neighbors. "They were mingled among the heathen and learned their works."[4] The God of Israel became a counter-

[1]Amos vi, 1.

[2]Ezekiel xxv, 8. Compare also Zephaniah ii, 8.

[3]On the Ammonites, compare Ezekiel xxv, 3; on the Philistines, ib. 14; on the Phenicians, ib. xxvi, 2; The general opposition to Israel may be inferred from such passages as Micah iv, 11 and Lamentations ii, 16.

[4]Psalm cvi, 35.

part of the Baal, and the religion of Israel a copy of that of the Canaanites. Consequently, Israel's claim to supreriority, to "selection," could no more lie in the sphere of religion. Superiority itself is valuable to it only when measured by the standards of mediocrity. Hence Israel's supremacy could only consist in that for which all other nations were competing—could only be political.

It may seem strange and may appear as an impeachment of the common sense of our ancestors that Israel, with its insignificant territory, which can easily lose itself in a fold of the American flag, and its slender political resources, should ever have attempted to lay claim to political superiority. But we must not forget that superiority is only a matter of comparison. However small Israel's territory may have been when measured by the enormous commonwealths of the present day or even by the great empires of antiquity, it was still larger than that of its neighbors. The Israelitish state was more extensive than the famous politics of the Phoenicians and the republics of the Philistines in the West, the kingdoms of Edom, Moab and Ammon in the South and East, and, when presenting a united front, was even superior to Aram in the North.

As for the natural resources and attractions of the country, Palestine was a land flowing with milk and honey, a land on which God's eyes rest from the beginning of the year to the end of the year,[1] a land which Jeremiah calls the beauty of the beauties of

[1]Deuteronomy xi, 12.

nations[1], and even Ezekiel, living on the fertile soil of Babylonia, proudly designates as the beauty of all lands.[2]

As for the capital, Jerusalem was no doubt the metropolis of a very considerable portion of Western Asia. Already as early as 1400 B. C. E., prior to the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites, Jerusalem seems to have been, if we are to trust the words of its governor, Abd-Hiba, as preserved in the Tell Amarna tablets, a celebrated center. Nineveh and Babylon were too far away to impair her importance, and Sidon and Tyre, which were nearer, were essentially commercial emporiums. Thus Jerusalem became "a mistress among the nations, a princess among the provinces,"[3] and her magnificent situation and the cheerfulness of her city life made her fully deserve the epithet "perfection of beauty,"[4] "the joy of the whole earth."[5]

Apart from these facts of reality, Israel still fondly clung to its old aspiration that its seed shall be as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea, and that its territory shall extend from the border of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, and, although seldom realized, it was a hope; and hope in the life of a nation is often more than reality. Thus Israel's claim to superiority was, at least in its own eyes, abundantly justified, and it henceforward devoted its whole life and energy to the task of fostering

[1]iii, 19.
[2]xx, 6, 15.
[3]Lamentations i, 1.
[4]Ibidem ii, 15; Psalm l, 2.
[5]Lamentations ii, 15; Psalm xlviii, 3.

and maintaining this political supremacy. The State is no more a means to an end, the insturment for the realization of the social ideal, but an end in itself: the expression of Israel's political grandeur.

This, however, could only last so long as the Assyrian colossus kept out of sight. With the moment the latter appears on the scene, Israel's political superiority is no more than foolish impertinence, an empty and miserable illusion. For what was all the political greatness of Israel, the "glory of Jacob," as they proudly styled it, as compared with this monster which carried with it everywhere dread and defeat? What were all the "men of valor" in Israel besides the irresistible Assyrian army in which "none is weary and none is stumbling, none is slumbering and none is asleep,"[1] which still strikes us with terror on the ancient monuments and in the thrilling descriptions of the prophets?[2] A struggle of life and death ensues. Israel hopes to keep up the illusion of its political supremacy by means of diplomacy, and thus save one illusion by another. It flutters between Assyria and Egypt, "like a silly dove without understanding."[3] But Egypt proves a broken reed[4] and Israel's doom is sealed. The northern kingdom, the larger of the two, falls a prey to Assyria, and its population is deported. Israel is not only struck in its body; it is struck in its very heart: the claim to superiority which it had

[1]Isaiah v, 27.

[2]Cf. Joel ii, 1-11, and especially the awe-inspiring description, Nahum ii, 4 ff.

[3]Hosea vii, 11.

[4]II Kings xviii, 21 = Isaiah xxxvi, 6.

fondled for centuries had miserably vanished like a vapor before the rising sun. It has no longer any reason for existence, it has nothing to live for. The proud vineyard of Ephraim is nothing more than ordinary brushwood which is burned and thrown away as useless.[1] It gives up the fight and is soon swallowed up.

Now comes the turn of Judah. Owing to the decline and subsequent destruction of the Assyrian Empire, Judah was granted a respite. Though sadly diminished, it now calls and considers itself the "remnant of Israel," and takes over the rôle of the "chief of nations" in the old sense of political supremacy. But instead of Assyria, Chaldea rises, the same land-devouring monster, "that smiteth the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruleth the nations in anger, persecuting and no end."[2] The same struggle ensues with the same consequences. Oholivah is forced to empty the deep and broad cup of her elder sister Oholah.[3] Judea is destroyed and Judah deported. Her political superiority bursts like a soap bubble, her *raison d'être* is destroyed; she has nothing to live for.

For what was Jacob's inheritance in comparison with the endless territories of Nebuchadnezzar's Empire? What was the "joy of the whole earth" beside the gigantic metropolis of Babylon, over whose walls, as the ancient historians tell us, six carriages could run to and fro? What was even the temple of Jeru-

[1]Ezekiel xv, 1.
[2]Isaiah xiv, 6.
[3]Ezekiel xxiii, 32,

salem, of which the Judaeans were so inordinately proud, "the excellency of their strength, the desire of their eyes, the yearning of their soul,"[1] beside the immeasurably lofty Babylonian *Zikkurrat*,[2] whose tops, glittering in all the colors of the rainbow, lost themselves in the clouds? The Judeans in Babylon saw no meaning in their lives. "Our bones are dried up, our hope is destroyed; we are lost,"[3] and the only logical consequence seemed to be: "Let us be like the heathen, like the nations of the earth!"[4] Judah was prepared to follow in the footsteps of her elder sister. She was standing on the brink of the abyss and ready to throw herself into it. In a moment she would have been lost, and, with her lack of monuments, lost without a trace, except for a few doubtful references on the ancient inscriptions—if the ancient inscriptions, without the stimulating interest in the Bible, had ever been rescued from oblivion.

But Judah did not leap into the abyss of destruction. In the last moment, Judah was caught by an invisible hand from behind and dragged away from the brink. Judah seemed a valley of dry bones, with no sign of life. But suddenly a breath of life came and began to breathe upon these slain. "And the breath came, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army."[5] And the life-giving breath

[1]Ibidem xxiv, 21.

[2]Temple towers—the prototype of the Mohammedan minarets.

[3]Ezekiel xxxvii, 11.

[4]Ibidem xx, 32.

[5]Ibidem xxxvii, 9-10.

which saved Judah from destruction and infused into it the desire and the power to live was none other than the *political ideal of the prophets*.

In what way then did the prophets accomplish the gigantic task of raising a nation from the dead and fill it with new indestructible vitality? The answer is implied in what has preceded. They accomplished it by transferring Israel's claim to superiority from a sphere where it was bound to crumble at the slightest contact with reality to a domain where it was unassailable and indestructible: they accomplished it by turning the *political* superiority of Israel into *religious*, or *spiritual*, supremacy.

However, had the prophets done nothing more than to formulate and emphasize the ideal of the religious selection of Israel, they would have done little, or less than little. Their ideal would have resulted in a sort of Utopia, in a Never-land and Nowhere-land, beyond time and space, without any relation to real national life. But the prophets did succeed because, politicians that they were, they blended this transcendental ideal with the concrete historical forces, and thus made it an immediate powerful factor in life.

For it is in essential agreement with the human aspect of Jewish prophecy that the prophets of Israel, these revolutionists *par excellence*, fully and solicitously acknowledge all that is historical in the life of the nation, all that has matured in the course of national existence, and has proved its efficacy and vitality. It is a remarkable fact, by no means sufficiently appreciated, that the prophets of Israel, who frequently were the irreconcilable enemies of the

powers that be, who were a pillar of iron and a wall of brass against the kings of Judah and her princes,[1] never tried to overthrow the government, or to undermine the constitution of their country. The deadly opponents of some of the individual occupants of the throne of David, whom they denounced with a bitterness and violence which, even in modern times, would send them to jail and scaffold, they were at the same time the staunchest upholders of the Davidic dynasty. While lashing the sins of Jerusalem, they were as proud of their capital as any other metropolitan resident, and, while calling down the vengeance of Heaven on the land of their birth, they loved it with all the ardor of their prophetic soul.

It is no wonder, therefore, that it never occured to the prophets to destroy the pernicious phantom of political superiority by destroying the body politic on which it depended. The prophets full well knew that a nation without a State is like a spirit without a body, that a nation, like any other organism, cannot perform its functions when dissected into atoms. But, while fully recognizing the necessity of the State and all the forces attached to it, they endeavored to infuse into it a new soul, to assign to it a new function. They believed and proclaimed that the polity in itself was indispensable, yet not indispensable in itself, but only as a means to an end; The State in itself is not the "glory of Jacob," the expression of Israel's superiority, it is merely the human agency for carrying into effect the true superiority of Israel—the religious, or social, or ethical ideal.

[1]Jeremiah i, 18.

This political ideal manifests itself in the activity of all the prophets of Israel, at least of those whom we are able to judge by their writings. It is visible in Amos and Hosea, although in their case, probably owing to the fragmentary character of their records, we observe it rather in its effect than in its genesis. At a time of the highest political triumph of Israel, the herdman of Tekoa, wrought up over the religious and social corruption of the Northern Kingdom, marches through the land of Israel, crying: "The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise. She is forsaken upon the ground, there is none to raise her up!"[1] And Hosea, barely a generation later, when the Israelites were forming alliances with the leading powers of Asia, untiringly scorns their vain and ridiculous attempts to play a political rôle. "Ephraim pursueth wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation, and they make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried into Egypt."[2]

But its most perfect formulation and crucial test the political ideal of the prophets received at the hands of Isaiah.

It would not accord with historic truth and would involve a disregard of the prophets before and at the time of Isaiah, were we to credit him with the sole authorship of the ideas we find expressed in his prophecies. There is little in the teachings of Isaiah which is not already implied in those of his predecessors Amos or Hosea, and clearly expressed by his

[1]Amos v, 2.
[2]Hosea xii, 2.

younger contemporary Micah. But to Isaiah is due the triumph of the political ideal of the prophets, not only because he gave it full and sublime expression but because, living at the most decisive moment in Judean history, and being nearer to the governing powers than any other prophet, he was able to make his ideal an immediate factor in life.

Isaiah lived at a time when the strong and many waters of the Euphrates began to roll irresistibly toward the Mediterranean, "passing through Judah, overflowing and going over, reaching even to the neck."[1] They first swallowed Ephraim, but Isaiah knew that Judah, too, would not be spared. He saw the disastrous effects of the misconceived political ideal in the fate of the North, and he set about to avert the same fate from the South.

In doing this Isaiah turns to account all the historical forces at the disposal of the nation. Isaiah is fully aware that the Judean commonwealth has been turned away from its purpose, and, instead of being an instrument of righteousness, has become a tool of iniquity. No prophet lashes with such furious eloquence the social wrongs of public life and the wickedness of Judah's governing classes. Yet he is far from discarding the State altogether. Isaiah is a most fervent patriot of the land of Israel, and this with a peculiar Judean admixture—which is fully in keeping with the general tendency of the political development in the Southern kingdom. It is a remarkable phenomenon that, while national life in the North is characterized

[1]Isaiah viii, 7-8.

by decentralization, the sister kingdom in the south is marked by a wonderful, almost unparalleled tendency toward centralization. In Israel we find many tribes whose interests were by no means harmonious, many dynasties, many sanctuaries, many capitals. There was no undisputed center toward which national life could gravitate. In Judah, which of course was smaller, we find only one tribe, Simeon having amalgamated with Judah at a very early period, and Benjamin never asserting its individuality. During the whole period of Judea's existence we find only one dynasty, with not a single attempt on the part of the people to replace it.[1] We find only one sacrificial center of undisputed superiority which the best of the nation endeavored more and more to make the exclusive center of the national religion.

Lastly, we find only one capital. In his famous Prism inscription, Sennacherib of Assyria boasts of having besieged no less than forty-six fortified cities in Judah, apart from minor localities "without number." Yet it is significant that none of these cities figures with any prominence in the history of Judah, or seems to have appreciably affected the life of the country. Jerusalem is not only the capital of Judah, it is Judah herself. Zion is the axis around which the whole life and activity of the nation rotates. This overwhelmingly commanding position of Jerusalem, coupled with her unassailable natural situation, and

[1]Athaliah's brief reign is an exception which confirms the rule. She usurped the throne and paid with her life for it. See later p 41 *et seq.*

probably also under the influence of the crude popular idea which regarded Zion, in a very literal sense, as the seat and dwelling place of the Almighty, gave rise to the peculiar belief in the *inviolability of Zion*, to the conviction that Zion, defended by her Divine resident, *could* not be conquered. Already Micah, as did afterwards on a similar occasion Jeremiah,[1] predicted the destruction of Jerusalem merely as a protest against the leaders of the nation "who build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity," and "yet lean upon the Lord, saying: Is not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us."[2] And how widespread this conviction was even outside of Judah, we can infer from the assertion of the Biblical poet that "the kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy could have entered into the gates of Jerusalem."[3]

Isaiah, himself a resident of the metropolis, gives his prophetic sanction to this belief of the people, and the doctrine of the inviolability of Zion becomes part and parcel of the prophet's political ideal. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."[4] It is not to be assumed that Isaiah, who at his installation beheld God sit-

[1]Cf. Jeremiah vii, 4, 9-10.
[2]Micah iii, 10-11.
[3]Lamentations iv, 12.
[4]Isaiah xxxiii, 20.

ting on His heavenly throne and filling the whole earth with His glory,[1] could ever have shared the popular mythological notion which tied down the Omnipresent to the narrow confines of Zion. Isaiah's doctrine must rather have rested on the belief that the city which contained the religious center of the nation, which was the foundation of David and the seat of his dynasty, and was the scene of the most memorable and most sacred experiences of the people, was indissolubly bound up with the existence of Judah. But however invaluable Zion may be, she is valueless in herself; what renders her invaluable is not the piece of ground she covers, but the ideal she embodies: as a city of righteousness, in which righteousness has its lodging place.[2] "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foudation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. . . But judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies."[3] Zion is the *political* center of the *spiritual*, or religious, or ethical, supremacy of Israel: the mount of Zion is lofty above all mounts, and not only the house of Jacob but the whole of mankind shall stream unto it. "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."[4]

If we be permitted to apply latter-day slogans to phenomena of a remote and venerable past, then I think we can no more fitly express the fundamental

[1]Ibidem vi, 1, 3.
[2]Ib. i, 21, 26.
[3]Ib. xxviii, 16-17.
[4]Ib. ii, 2-3.

idea of Isaiah than by terming it *Spiritual Zionism*: Zion, the inalienable center of the Jewish nation, yet not the seat of its political grandeur, but the frame and the focus of its spiritual aspirations, whether embodied in righteousness, religion, or culture.

This cardinal doctrine of Isaiah—the inviolability of Zion—is supplemented by another which gave the former its driving force and an immediate effect on the course of political life. I mean the idea which Isaiah symbolized by naming his son *She'ar Yashub*, "A-Remnant-will-return." Isaiah witnessed in the early part of his ministry the decline and downfall of the Northern kingdom. The house of Jacob, which was politically split into two, yet nationally always felt itself as one, was now robbed of its larger half. Judah became a mere "remnant of Israel." But Isaiah recognized that, even in its present reduced state, the nation in its totality was still too large, and neither willing nor capable to be the executive of Israel's spiritual aspirations. The bulk of the people consciously and maliciously made their heart fat, their ears heavy and their eyes shut.[1] There were but few, a small remnant, a remnant within the remnant, that were fit and prepared to take upon their shoulders the tasks for which the nation lived. However, the supremacy of Israel not being political but spiritual, it did not depend on numbers. The very selection of Israel implied a quantitative reduction. Therefore a further selection was necessary which, by a continued process of sifting, should separate the chaff from the

[1] Ib. vi, 10.

grain and allow but the fittest to survive. "And I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin."[1] At his very installation, when crushed by the enunciation of the utter desolation of Israel and of a great forsaking in the midst of the land,[2] he was comforted by the promise: "Yet a tenth shall remain in it which will again be purged. As a teil tree and an oak, when casting off their leaves, yet retain a stock, so shall a holy seed be the stock thereof."[3] And with an unmistakable side-glance at the old political ambition, so eagerly fondled by the masses, he pointedly exclaims: "Only a remnant shall return, a remnant of Jacob unto the Almighty God: *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return.*"[4]

This doctrine had of necessity a revolutionizing effect on the whole course of national politics. Judah had thrown herself head over heels into the whirlpool of politics which engulfed the nations of Western Asia. But if Judah's supremacy did not depend on political grandeur and was rather hampered by it, then Judah had nothing to win and everything to lose from the contact with the political factors of the world. "Hands off from politics!" is, therefore, the earnest and constant warning of the prophet. "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In repentance and in rest shall ye be saved; in quiet-

[1]Ib. i, 25.
[2]Ib. vi, 12.
[3]Ib. vi, 13.
[4]Ib. x, 21-22.

ness and in confidence shall be your bravery."[1] When King Ahaz was about to summon Assyrian aid against the united attack of Aram and Israel, Isaiah passionately dissuaded him from hissing for the bee in the land of Ashur.[2] But when at a later period, after the death of Sargon, Judah formed the center of a conspiracy to throw off the Assyrian yoke he bitterly scorned the rebellious Judeans who "take counsel, but not of God, and pile sin upon sin."[3] The greatest dishonor to the politicians of the popular school was the necessity of paying tribute to a foreign power, such tribute being incompatible with the "national honor," with Israel's claim to political supremacy. Isaiah coolly faces such necessity and even seems to welcome it, as long as it insures unrestricted autonomous self-government, and with it an independent and unhampered spiritual development. Only when Zion herself is in danger, when the fountain and center of the nation's existence is threatened, only then is the prophet ready to fight to the last. When in 701 Sennacherib, having invaded the country, demanded the surrender of the capital, Isaiah was the only one who offered a plain, resolute "No!" "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, despiseth thee and laugheth thee to scorn, the daughter of Jerusalem shaketh her head at thee."[4] "For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion."[5]

[1] Ib. xxx, 15.
[2] Ib. vii, 18.
[3] Ib. xxx, 1.
[4] Ib. xxxvii, 22 = II Kings xix, 21.
[5] Isaiah xxxvii, 32 = II Kings xix, 31.

Zion and the holy remnant are inseparable. "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem."[1]

Isaiah was granted an associate in king Hezekiah who, with the exception of a few backslidings, followed in his foot steps and faithfully endeavored to carry his lofty ideals into reality. Although a vassal of Assyria, Hezekiah accomplished the outer and inner consolidation of his greatly reduced nation. He abolished the local sanctuaries which were injurious to the central position of Zion,[2] and he induced the tribes of the North, such as were left after the catastrophe of 722, to acknowledge the supremacy of the national sanctuary in Jerusalem.[3] His reign was a period of intense spiritual and literary activity, the memory of which still reverberates in Rabbinic tradition.[4] It was a short respite, to be sure, but long enough to allow the formation of a holy remnant which withstood all the vicissitudes that were now in store for the nation and subsequently proved the salvation of Israel.

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[1]Isaiah, iv, 3.

[2]II Kings xviii, 4-5.

[3]II Chronicles xxx. The historicity of the account is proved by the omission of Naphtali (verse 10) which had been exiled by Tiglat-Pileser (II Kings xv, 29). See the article "Hezekiah's Great Passover," *infra* p. 59 *et seq.*

[4]The "men of Hezekiah" are credited, among other things, with the redaction of a part of the Biblical canon, *Baba Bathra* 15a.

The influence of the political ideal as formualted and applied by Isaiah continued to be a working force long after Isaiah, and manifested itself in essentially the same form and intensity in all the subsequent prophets.

Jeremiah, the lofty patriot whose bowels yearn for his people when his soul heareth the sound of the trumpet of war,[1] coolly counsels submission to Babylon, which was ready to leave Judah its autonomy, and passionately warns against diplomatic intrigues and transactions. Zion is valuable only as the seat of Israel's spiritual supremacy. But now that she cannot show even a single man that executeth judgment and seeketh the truth,[2] she has no reason for existence. When through the short-sighted Judean politicians, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, Jeremiah—in this respect different from Isaiah—advised the temporary surrender of the capital,[3] but only the temporary. For as soon as Zion had received her due punishment and her inhabitants were led captive to Babylon, he suddenly turned from a prophet of scorn to a prophet of consolation, and loudly proclaimed that there was a hope for Judah's future when the children would return to their own border and come and rejoice on the height of Zion.[4] When given the choice between the court at Babylon whither the Chaldean Napoleon had generously invited him and the miserable remains of

[1]Jeremiah iv, 19.
[2]Ib. v, 1.
[3]Ib. xxxiv, xxxvii ff.
[4]Ib. xxxi, 16, 11.

the Judean commonwealth under Gedaliah at Mizpah, he preferred the latter.[1] And when, after the murder of Gedaliah, the Judean remnant, fearing the vengeance of the Babylonian sovereign, intended to flee from the country, he passionately exhorted it to cling to its fatherland.[2] He was dragged by force to Egypt. But his soul remained in Zion, which he, too, called "the habitation of righteousness, the mountain of holiness,"[3] "the throne of the Lord,"[4] —of the Lord "who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth."[5]

The prophet Ezekiel was in character and temperament fundamentally different from Jeremiah, but his conception of the political ideal was the same. Ezekiel lived in Babylonia amidst the Judean captivity, smarting under the misfortune of being in a strange land. Yet he persistently warned the king in Jerusalem against engaging in politics and bitterly denounced him for breaking his oath of allegiance to the king of Babylon, who was ready to respect Judah's autonomy.[6] And when the news of the surrender of the capital was conveyed to the prophet by a courier, he became for a time speechless with sorrow,[7] and he henceforward devoted himself to laying out the plans of the future Zion as the seat of Israel's theocracy.[8]

[1]Ib. xl, 4-6.

[2]Ib. xlii, 10 ff.

[3]Ib. xxxi, 22.

[4]Ib. iii, 17. Verses 14-18 are an independent prophecy, but may well be genuine.

[5]Ib. ix, 23.

[6]Ezekiel xvii, 11 ff.

[7]Ib. xxxiii, 21-22.

[8]Cf. ib. xl-xlviii.

The force of Isaiah's political doctrine can best be seen in him who—not altogether artificially—is called Isaiah the Second. The Great Unknown Prophet lived in Babylon, and he was apparently well acquainted with Babylonian life and culture. But while to the old Judean diplomatists who believed in the *political* supremacy of Israel the contact with Babylonia was fatal, because it convinced them of the inferiority and therefore the uselessness of their nation, to the inspired seer who believed in the *religious* supremacy of Israel the contact with Babylonia was life-giving, because it demonstrated to him the inferiority of Babylonia. The "second Isaiah" untiringly points to the idolatry, the rude and ridiculous superstitions of the mighty political oppressors of Israel, and it is deeply significant that the great prophet of the Babylonian exile is the great champion of a Jewish mission to the Gentiles, and that out of the darkness of the captivity Israel shone forth as "a light to the nations."[1] But this light could, in the prophet's opinion, only radiate from Zion. The apostle of Universalism speaks in accents of sublime affection of poor, tempest-stricken, uncomforted Zion,[2] and he passionately preaches the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and to the holy mount, for there, and only there, can Israel's sanctuary become "a house of prayer for all the nations.[3]

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[1]Cf. Isaiah xlii, 6, xlix, 6, li, 4 and lx, 3.
[2]Ib. liv, 11.
[3]Ib. lvi, 7.

A famous philosopher has formulated the mystery of human existence in the words: *Cogito, ergo sum*, "I *think*, therefore I am." The secret of national existence may, in a similar manner, be expressed in the formula: "I *hope*, therefore I am." A nation, which is not subject to physical death, lives as long as it hopes, as long as it has something to live for. The Judean exiles in Babylonia who complained to Ezekiel: "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost," were soon lost themselves and disappeared. But those who, taught by the scribes and cheered by the prophets, continued to hope, survived. Face to face with their conquerors, who at first had made them feel their inferiority and with it the purposelessness of their existence, the Judean captives, realizing the spiritual character of their supremacy, became conscious of their immesaurable superiority over their oppressors and the tremendous task they had to live for. Their eyes were opened and they suddenly perceived a new heaven and a new earth.[1] But this new earth to them was their old land, and the new heaven was the sky that shone over Judah. As soon as an opportunity presented itself, a considerable portion of the exiles,[2] carrying with them the gifts and the ardent wishes of those that remained behind,[3] started on their way home, filling their mouth with

[1]Ib. lxv, 17.

[2]On the probable percentage of those that returned, see the article "Were Our Ancestors Capable of Self Government?" *Infra*, p. .

[3]Ezra i, 6.

laughter and their tongue with rejoicing.[1] They took up the historic thread where it had been dropped. Under the leadership of a scion of the Davidic dynasty, they settled in and around the metropolis, and set out at once to build their temple, the emblem of their religious supremacy. They were now cured of their political ambitions. They were satisfied to be a remnant—the holy remnant which Isaiah had foreseen in his vision—and were ready to return to the Almighty God. Zion was not to be the seat of political grandeur but a "city of truth" and a "holy mount,"[2] a place where, as the prophet Zechariah[3] simply but impressively puts it, "true judgment is executed, where everyone shows mercy and compassion to his brother; where they do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the stranger and the poor, and where none imagines evil against his brother in his heart." And though Zion may no more be the beauty of the beauties of nations, she will have the greater attraction of truth, for "many people and mighty nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Zion, and to pray before the Lord."[4]

When, shortly after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the foundations were laid for the new temple, with joyous and impressive ceremonies, many of those who had witnessed the splendor of the first temple burst out crying at the insignificant dimensions of the religious center of the new com-

[1]Psalm cxxvi, 2.
[2]Zechariah viii, 3.
[3]Ibidem vii, 9-10; compare viii, 16-17.
[4]Ibidem viii, 22.

munity.[1] These disappointed veterans, who despised "the day of small things,"[2] listened eagerly to Haggai, who comforted them with the promise that "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.[3] But Zechariah found sublime words for a sublime thought when he exclaimed: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel saying: 'Not by might nor by power but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' "[4] This appeal to spirituality uttered on the newly recovered soil of Zion and reverberating with the issues of a rejuvenated national existence is the shortest and noblest formulation of the political ideal of the prophets.

"With the death of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi," so our Rabbis declare,[5] "the holy spirit departed from Israel." Modern critics, from a diametrically opposite point of view, draw a similar line of demarcation and speak of the period following that of the prophets sneeringly as the "genesis of Judaism."[6] But this demarcation is unjust as well as unfounded. For the scribes were the faithful followers of the prophets and Ezra was the disciple of Isaiah. The distance that separates them is the distance between the high-soaring, radiant ideal and sordid, unyielding reality. The scribes made earnest with the postulate of Israel's

[1]Ezra iii, 12-13; compare Haggai ii, 3.

[2]Zechariah iv, 10.

[3]ii, 9.

[4]iv, 6.

[5]Yoma 9b, and elsewhere.

[6]Compare, *e. g.*, the title of Eduard Meyer's well-known book, *die Entstehung des Judentums.* Halle, 1896.

religious supremacy, as promulgated by the prophets. The Jews of the post-exilic age were only a weak, insignificant remnant, surrounded by dangerous foes, and by still more dangerous friends, and absorption stared them in the face. They did not wish to be dissolved; they were not fascinated by the prospect, which seemed so attractive to rising Christianity, to become "the salt of the earth" which in the end is bound to lose its saltness.[1] They wanted to preserve their identity and to benefit humanity rather as an "ever-flowing spring whose waters fail not."[2] Their only escape from extinction lay in isolation, and they were ready to pay the price. And when on the twentieth of Kislev 458, the people, shivering from cold and excitement, gathered on the street around Ezra and took a vow to send away their foreign wives and the children born from them, and to separate themselves from the peoples of the earth,[3] the political ideal of the prophets achieved its final and lasting triumph.

There are people, and people in our own midst, who, with an air of unapproachable superiority, are loud in their denunciation of the narrow-mindedness and cruelty of this action. These censors of morals would sing the praises of those who risk their lives in warfare to gain a strip of land or to satisfy the whim of a ruler, and they go into raptures over the herosim of the four hundred Spartans who fell at

[1]Cf. Matthew v, 13; Mark ix, 50; Luke xiv, 34.
[2]Isaiah lviii, 11.
[3]Ezra x.

Thermopylae, "faithful to the laws of their country." But those who gathered around Ezra and, faithful to the laws of their country, their God and their people, sacrificed not their lives, but their lives' happiness, and disrupted the most sacred and most tender bonds of the human heart to save their nation from death and its ideal from extinction, can lay claim to far greater herosim. And were modern mankind, among them our own people, less swayed by pagan standards and ideals, they would venerate the memory of Ezra and his followers, who, by an unparalleled sacrifice, preserved the message of the prophets and succeeded to carry it into the life of humanity.

* * *

Twenty-five centuries have passed since the political ideal of the prophets was put to test in the Babylonian captivity and carried to victory by the returned exiles on the reconquered mount of Zion. And now their late descendants, the sons of the Golus, are confronted by similar dangers and difficulties. There are those among us who exclaim: "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost," and they long to become like the heathen, the nations of the earth. There are others, again, who still cling to the belief that there is a hope for the future when the children will return to their border. But the wheel of history has brought on the scene two new factions which our ancestors knew not. It has been left to our age of strict science and cold materialism to evolve a conception of Israel which detaches it from its soil and turns

it into a spirit without a body. On the other hand, even those who continue to hope look upon Zion as the material center of our people, as its refuge from poverty and distress, and the glorious embodiment of its economic and political grandeur. The former hope to preserve the Jewish spirit without Zion, the latter would save Zion even without the Jewish spirit. But those of us who still cherish the memory of the prophets and pin their faith to their ideals see in Zion above all the consummation of our *spiritual* strivings. To them Zion does not spell great numbers and vast territories, big armies and large navies. To them Zion is dear as the *spiritual* center of our people, where, independent of numbers and dimensions, the Jewish *spirit*—the *Jewish* spirit—can develop free and unhampered, where the "holy remnant," conscious of its mission, lives as a model and a blessing to the rest of Israel and mankind, where the ancient ideal is realized in a modern form: "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

II

NATIONALISM AND ASSIMILATION IN BIBLE TIMES*

THERE are many ways of looking at the Bible. One of them which strangely enough has been largely neglected in our midst is the outlook upon the Bible as the record of the Jewish people during the formative period of its existence and of the great issues which were fought out during that period, with results determining the entire subsequent development of our race. One of these issues which has been of fundamental importance to Judaism down to this day may be expressed in modern terms: *Nationalism versus Assimilation.*

Without any attempt at a strict definition, we may formulate Assimilation as the tendency of a people to become *similar* to the other nations, and Nationalism as the endeavor to retain its identity, to be *different* from the other nations. The former is mostly unconscious, or semi-conscious, because it means *yielding* to nature; the latter is generally

*From a lecture delivered at the Second Annual Convention of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association at Philadelphia, on December 28, 1915, under the title "Problems of Bible Times in Modern Judaism." The following is merely a brief outline of the lecture prepared after its delivery. It is a restatement of the views expounded in the preceding article from a slightly different angle.

conscious, because it involves *resistance* to nature. Hence, apart from all other considerations, Nationalism is morally superior to Assimilation.

The struggle between these two principles fills the whole biblical period. Assimilation manifests itself in the worship of the Baal, the deity of the environment; Nationalism finds its expression in the doctrine of the selection of Israel, as a nation different from, and superior to, its environment. The people at large constantly relapses into the easy ways of assimilation; the leaders indefatigably point to Israel's stern duty to be different from the rest of the world.

The magnitude of this struggle can more fully be realized today, owing to the great archeological discoveries which have revealed the high state of civilization attained by Israel's neighbors during the biblical period. It was a tremendous task for Israel, a nation of peasants and but lately a horde of nomads, to keep his identity within an environment which, from the point of view of external civilization, was far superior to him. Yet Israel *had* to be different if he did not wish to be swallowed by the environment. Such a fate, indeed, befell Ephraim, the northern part of the nation. In Judah the banner of Nationalism, of Israel's distinctiveness, was unfurled by Isaiah and kept aloft by the later prophets. The real test came in 586 when the Jews were exiled to Babylonia.

There were many Jews at that time who fell a prey to Assimilation. They became "like the nations, like the families of the lands"—and disappeared. A remnant, however, resolved to be different and to live. The great unknown Prophet of the Exile preaches

more fervently than any of his predecessors the selection of Israel and his duty to remain distinct.

The practical application of the prophetic doctrine of Nationalism is found in the second Jewish Commonwealth. The builders of that commonwealth were resolved to be different from the other nations. When the Samaritans offered to assist them in rebuilding the temple they refused to accept the offer: "it is not for you and us to build a house unto our Lord." The final triumph of this prophetic Nationalism was consummated when at the suggestion of Ezra and Nehemiah the Jews declared themselves ready to make the unparalleled sacrifice of sending away their foreign wives and the children born of them, and to become *Nibdalim*, "separated" from the environment. Christian scholars speak derisively of this "Nibdalism," but without this Nibdalism Judaism would have disappeared long ago.

This Nibdalism, however, implies that even our Nationalism must be different from that of the others. It differs in two fundamental respects:

(1) *Jewish Nationalism is spiritual.* Israel's ideal is to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The Jewish State is only a means to this end. The prophet who spoke at the dedication of the temple of the second Jewish Commonwealth, a fervent nationalist, declared: "Not by might nor by strength but by my spirit."

(2) *Jewish Nationalism is universalistic.* It is *not* chauvinistic. Israel's selection implies that it serves humanity. The conception of Israel as the *Ebed Adonai*, "the Servant of the Lord," for the benefit of

mankind—the conception which today goes by the name of a "Jewish Mission"—is a product of the Babylonian Exile. The great nationalistic prophet of that period exclaims: "My house shall be a house of prayer for all the nations." Israel can only benefit the world by keeping distinct. Hence the favorite simile of this prophet: Israel is "a light unto the nations." A light radiates into space, while remaining distinct.

The same great struggle between Nationalism and Assimilation is being fought out today. If Israel is to survive, he must have the courage to be different, to think his own thoughts, to feel his own feelings, to live his own life, but to do so, not from any narrow chauvinistic motive, but with the lofty consciousness that only in this way does he fulfill his destiny—for the benefit of mankind.

III

WERE OUR ANCESTORS CAPABLE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT?*

NOTHING is so revolting in modern Jewish life as the eagerness with which the Jews of to-day are ready to adopt the opinions and—what is frequently identical—the prejudices of non-Jews regarding Jews and Judaism, as that hideous Jewish anti-Semitism which must logically end in open or veiled apostasy. The last year-book of a Jewish theological association contains a paper by a Rabbi, entitled "The Significance of the Bible for Reform Judaism in the Light of Modern Scientific Research." In this paper, in which some of the most offensive and most disputed vagaries of non-Jewish and anti-Jewish Bible critics are boldly set forth as incontrovertible truths, the following sentences, because of their immediate bearing on a great Jewish movement of to-day, are apt to arrest the attention of the reader:

> The history of Israel and Judah is in the main one of tribute and vassalage to, with occasional revolt against, now Tyre, now Syria, now Assyria, now Babylon. It is on the whole a gloomy record of bad government, tyranny and oppression, such as has been characteristic of every little Oriental state from the beginning of history. It is the most incontrovertible proof that Israel's genius does not lie in the field of self-government, that from first to last as a nation Israel was a most dismal failure.

*Appeared first in the *American Hebrew* on March 26,1909.

The notion that the Jews (or the Semites in general) were, and still are, incapable of self-government has so persistently been maintained by Aryan scholars, and has with such nauseating self-contempt been repeated by Jews that it is high time to approach it more closely and to examine it "in the light of scientific research," which is perhaps not modern, if modern be identical with sensational, but is nevertheless in accordance with the facts.

First of all it must be stated that the initial sentence in the above quotation is a gross—if I were to adopt the tone of the paper I would say a malicious—exaggeration. Tyre has nothing to do in this connection. Syria occasionally defeated Israel, but Israel also occasionally defeated Syria. If Syria humbled Israel under Jehoahaz, it was again humbled by Israel under his successors Jehoash and Jeroboam, and it formed an alliance with Israel under Pekah. As for Assyria and Babylon, the following facts may speak for themselves. The Kingdom of Judah was founded about 1020, that of Israel in 933. But the decisive influence of Assyria over the destinies of our people did not begin until 735, when Tiglath-Pileser III set his foot on Israelitish soil, and that of Babylon over Judah until 605 when the victory of Nebuchadnezzar at the battle of Carchemish turned Judah unto a Babylonian dependency. In any event the sway of Assyria and Babylon over Israel or Judah during the period of their existence never went beyond a monetary exaction, to which even mighty Egypt and the other countries of Western Asia were occasionally forced to submit, and which did not in the slightest

degree interfere with their autonomous independence and self-government. The question, therefore, whether our ancestors were capable of self-government can and should be detached from their foreign relations to the great military powers of the East.

Now, when speaking of "our ancestors, a people with no aptitude for government," our author certainly does not refer to the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes. There are Englishmen who proudly proclaim that they are the descendants of the ancient Israelites. There are others who confer this distinction upon the Red Indians, but I have yet to meet a Jew who claims descent from the "haughty drunkards of Ephraim," and I am sure that even "modern scientific research" has not enabled our writer to save this privilege for him. Accordingly, the only country with which we have to deal is that of the Judeans.

What then are the facts which give the author of our paper the right to speak with such sovereign contempt of the inability of our ancestors to take care of themselves? Judah existed as an independent kingdom (after the secession of the Ten Tribes) from 933 to 586. During the entire length of these 347 years—a term which ought to be sufficient as a period of test for a citizen of the New World—*we do not detect the faintest trace of a single civil war.* In the course of the whole period, beginning with the reign of David about 1000, and ending with the destruction of the Kingdom in 586, *we do not hear of a single change of dynasty, nor of a single attempt at a change of dynasty.* The only exception, that of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, confirms the rule. For she was

not a Judean, but an Israelitish princess; she usurped the throne of Judah, in violent opposition to the Judean national sentiment, and was overthrown and killed by the faithful Judeans after an illegitimate reign of six years. The loyalty of the Judean nation to its reigning house is overwhelmingly illustrated by the fact, unparalleled in the history of mankind, that twenty-five hundred years after its extinction the Davidic dynasty is still indissolubly bound up with the Messianic aspirations of our people. Surely, if self-restraint, discipline, respect for authority and its representatives be characteristic of the ability of self-government, then the genius of our ancestors, against the assertion of our author, certainly did lie "in the field of self-government."

It is true, Judah never equalled, or intended to equal, the great military powers of Western Asia—although, on the other hand, it was never as small as any of the celebrated republics of ancient Greece. But the reason for its limited expansion was not because, as the author so charitably puts it, "from first to last as a nation Israel was a most dismal failure," but just because as a nation in the true sense of the word, i. e., as a community of common origin and common development, and as a nation only, did our ancestors care to perpetuate their political existence. It was centuries later when the *marshi'e brith*, "such as did wickedly against the covenant" (Daniel xi, 32), began to undermine the national foundations of the Jewish commonwealth, and an anti-national dynasty with un-Jewish imperialistic tendencies usurped the throne of David, that the Jewish commonwealth actually became "a most dismal failure."

It is also true that the prophets frequently castigate the *social* injustice, the "bad government, tyranny and oppression" of the leading classes of Judah. But if we are to take the prophets literally, then our ancestors were just as completely devoid of a religious genius, which our author is rightly anxious to emphasize, as of the ability of self-government. For the prophets assuredly were not less fierce in denouncing Israel's irreligion than they were in lashing its "bad government." The fact of the matter is that the ideals of the prophets were, as our author himself puts it, "so immeasurably in advance of the standards and capacities of their age and of succeeding ages" that they were bound to find fault with reality. And with all our devotion to this great republic of ours, whose genius, as our author will surely not deny, does lie in "the field of self-government," we may safely assume that, were one of the old prophets to rise from his grave and to be permitted to speak his mind—without being lynched—he would scarcely be more complimentary to us than he was to our unfortunate ancestors.

This platitude of the Jews' inability to govern themselves is followed by another, closely related to it and equally justified, ascribing to our ancestors a lack of patriotism. Towards Assyria or Babylon, perchance? Heaven forbid! For our author, who is probably first American and then Jew, would consider such an attitude an unpardonable crime. The lack of patriotism charged against our ancestors is "only" towards Palestine, their own native land:

> And finally—says the writer—we see Jerusalem captured and Judah led captive to Babylon, at first to mourn, but

> soon to recover from its grief, and so quickly feel itself at home in this new land that later, when opportunity offered to return to the fatherland, only the smallest fraction availed themselves thereof. Even then, twenty-five hundred years ago, the unifying and inspiring force in Judaism was not the land where Israel dwelt, nor the possession of autonomous government.

This supposition that our ancestors at the time of the Babylonian captivity were devoid of that natural sentiment towards their native land which is to be found even among savages is a gross fallacy, not to use a shorter and uglier word. Seldom have facts of history been so unscrupulously distorted, as is done by our author and other like-minded historians, to suit a shallow flimsy theory. When the Judeans were led captive to Babylon for the first time under Jehojachin (in 597) they numbered 8,000[1], or 10,000.[2] The number of exiles carried off to Babylonia in 586 cannot be determined with certainty. According to Stade, it was smaller than that of the first captivity. According to others[3], it was "considerably larger."[4] To be perfectly fair, let us adopt the latter view and assume as a rough guess that the second deportation was three times as large as the first. Let us further suppose that in the course of the half century of the Babylonian captivity the Jewish population in

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[1] II Kings xxiv, 16.

[2] *Ibidem*, verse 14. Compare Stade in *Zeitschrift fur alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, iv, 271 ff.

[3] See Buhl, *Die socialen Verhaeltenisse de Israeliten*, p. 53.

[4] Compare also, if our author will pardon us for quoting a *Jewish* authority, Graetz' History of the Jews, German edition, Volume II, second half, p. 377 ff.

Babylon doubled its numbers—truly a fair percentage of natural increase. How many Jews were then in Babylon, "when opportunity offered to return to the fatherland?" Not quite 100,000. Now what was the "smallest fraction" that "availed themselves thereof?" 42,360 with 7,337 servants and 200 (or 245) singers,[1]—not to mention those who followed later under Ezra,[2]—in other words, more than one-half! To be still fairer, and to provide for any possible mistake in the above calculations, let us grant that those who returned were less than half; they certainly formed a very considerable percentage of the Jewish population in Babylon. When we remember that the conditions in which the exiles lived were exceedingly favorable, that they were kindly and considerately treated by the Babylonian, and later on by the Persian rulers, that their financial circumstances in prosperous Babylonia were far superior to those in desolate Palestine, when we take into consideration the perils of the journey which took no less than four months,[3] then we cannot but marvel at the unparalleled patriotism of our ancestors, and we must truthfully acknowledge that it was the *land* which was "the unifying and inspiring force in Judaism." Surely, no other nation of antiquity or of modern times has ever accomplished the task of

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[1] Ezra ii, 64; Nehemiah vii, 66.

[2] Ezra, Chapter viii.

[3] Ezra vii, 9.

returning to its fatherland under the same or under similar conditions.[1]

To be sure, already then, "twenty-five hundred years ago," there were Jews in Babylon who in the comfort and prosperity of the strange land "forsook the Lord and forgot His holy mount"[2], who contemptuously sneered at these patriotic enthusiasts, and noisily shouted: "we will be as the Gentiles, as the families of the lands."[3] But it was they who were the "smallest fraction," whereas the bulk of Babylonian Jewry "lifted up their soul to return,"[4] and those of them who were unable to fulfil their heart's desire readily and liberally assisted their more fortunate brethren.[5] Nay, some of these Babylonian Jews showed themselves so little "spiritual" that they manifested their enthusiasm over the Return by donating a diadem for the rulers of the new commonwealth.[6]

As for the prophets, over whom the writer of our paper and his associates seem to have assumed a monopoly, whose teachings and ideals, if we are to believe his assertions, we have come to appreciate only today through the instrumentality of Reform

[1] Psalm cxxvi clearly shows that already at the time of the Return the contemporaries were fully conscious of the uniqueness of the event. The Jews looked upon it as a dream (verse 1), whereas the heathen declared ,"The Lord hath done great things for them." (verse 2).

[2] Isaiah lxv, 11.

[3] Ezekiel xx, 32.

[4] Compare Jeremiah xxii, 27.

[5] Ezra i, 6.

[6] Compare Zechariah vi, 11.

Judaism, disconcerting as it may appear to our author, it is nevertheless a fact that the prophets were just as narrow-minded as the "Jews" Ezra and Nehemiah and, like them, expected Israel's—and mankind's—salvation to come from a "small corner of Western Asia." It was the great Isaiah who with unrivalled patriotism formulated the belief in the inviolability of Zion. It was Jeremiah who desperately clung to the last shreds of autonomous government under Gedaliah and, in face of supreme danger, passionately exhorted the Judean remnant to hold fast to their commonwealth. It was Ezekiel who was so wrapped up in the hope of the Return that he elaborated the constitution of the future land and laid down the plans of the future temple with a precision and wealth of detail which might excite the envy of professional statesmen and architects. It was the great Anonymous, the inspired champion of the lofty Jewish ideal, to which the Reform Jews have given the Christian name of a Jewish Mission, who with burning enthusiasm and thrilling tenderness exhorted and implored the exiles to comfort the afflicted widow of Zion. It was Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the last of Israel's prophets, who devoted all their energy and eloquence to the establishment and strengthening of the new commonwealth. Surely, were it to be admitted, as is claimed by our author, that the only "true followers" of the prophets of Israel are to be found among the Reform Jews, were the prophets to them more than an empty phrase and a convenient subterfuge from the burdens of the Law, then *they* ought to be among the first to work for "the possession

of an autonomous government" and for the realization of the prophetic ideal that "the Law shall go forth out of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

We have confined ourselves to two passages in the paper under discussion because of their tendency to discredit a great Jewish movement of the present day, a tendency which—as is recorded in the same year-book—was unmistakably confirmed by the "philistine-like outburst" of applause from the audience and by the protests of two of the author's colleagues. But this does not imply that the rest of the paper stands on a higher level. As a matter of fact, it is only a rehash of all that is most offensive to Jewish sentiment and Jewish dignity in "modern scientific research," and its only originality consists in the uncharitable and irreverent tone which is unusual even among the "high" and "highest" critics. As far as the contents of the paper are concerned, they show our utter submissiveness and servility in the face of non-Jewish opinion. As for the form, it is a matter of taste and—*de gustibus non est disputandum*. But perhaps it is not inopportune to recall the words of one who can hardly be accused of orthodox leanings or of connivance at conservative tendencies. It is Friedrich Nietzsche, the great revolutionizer of all standards and values, who has penned the following words—discourteous, to be sure, but truthful—which have a direct bearing on the subject under discussion:[1]—

> The manner—quoth Nietzsche—in which on the whole the reverence for the Bible has been maintained in Europe is perhaps the finest bit of discipline and refinement which

[1] *Jenseits von Gut und Boese*, No. 263.

Europe owes to Christianity: such books of depth and ultimate significance need for their protection an external tyranny of authority in order to gain those thousands of years of permanence which are necessary to draw from them as well as to divine their last meaning. Much is gained when the big crowd (the Shallow and Quick-boweled of all sorts) are at last trained to feel that they have no right to finger everything; that there are sacred experiences before which they have to put off their shoes and hold back their filthy hands,—it is, as it were, their highest elevation to humanity. As for the so-called educated, the adepts of "modern ideas," nothing is perhaps more disgusting than their lack of shame, their convenient impudence of eye and hand with which they touch, lick and finger everything.

IV

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM*

GOD'S promise to Abraham, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, stands at the threshold of Jewish history. It transforms Abram the individual into Abraham, "the father of many nations," but above all into the patriarch of the Jewish nation. In form it addresses itself to Abraham, but its contents point to the birth and subsequent destinies of the Jewish race. The message of our chapter is composed of two parts logically linked with each other. The one promises Abraham a numerous seed, the other promises his seed a land of its own: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars . . . So shall thy seed be" (v. 5). "Unto thy seed have I given this land" (v. 18).

And so precious does the possession of a home appear in the eyes of the patriarch, who had had to leave his own home, that the prospect of his seed inheriting the land where he himself, with all his wealth and influence, is but a stranger and wanderer, quite overwhelms him. While at the promise—infinitely more miraculous—of a numerous seed he believes in the Lord, and it is counted to him for righteousness, at the promise of an independent soil he anxiously inquires, "Whereby shall I know that

*Published in the *Sunday School Times* on February 9, 1907, as part of the International Bible Lessons on Genesis xv.

I shall inherit it?" (v. 8), and he is relieved of his anxiety only when God confirms his promise by a solemn covenant.

However, the most precious gifts are not those which are easily acquired. Earthly possessions are acquired, appreciated when after hard struggle and bitter experience. The Jewish nation was not to receive the Promised Land as a ready gift. While Nature around him darkens, the patriarch, seized with the horror of great darkness, hears in his sleep the awe-inspiring words, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (v. 13). Only after having been tested in this bitter trial, after having drained the cup of homelessness, the Jewish nation would be worthy to acquire and able to appreciate the blessing of a home.

The announcement of Israel's trial, which is interwoven with God's promise, undoubtedly refers to Israel's suffering in the Egyptian bondage, and it has been calculated that the space between the birth of Isaac, when the promise first began to be realized, and the Exodus from Egypt amounts exactly to four hundred years. But our ancient rabbis noticed that this prediction was to become symbolic of the whole Jewish history, that it typified the succession of bondages in which Israel was held in all subsequent periods.

It typifies as well the position of the Jewish people at the present time. For the Jew of today, living in an age which prides itself upon its enlightenment

and civilization, which has proclaimed as its motto the greatest happiness of the greatest number, which concentrates its energy on overbridging distances, and thus bringing man nearer to man,—even the Jew of to-day, hears, while seized with the horror of great darkness, the fearful cry, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them." The overwhelming majority of the Jewish nation, crowded in Russia, Roumania, Galicia, and in some countries of the East, are treated with a refinement of cruelty which would outrage the conscience of humanity were it accorded to beasts. Deprived of the most elementary human rights, regarded as outcasts and outlaws, made the lightning-conductors for the brutal passions of brutal mobs, a majority of our race, numbering nearly eight millions, with ancient traditions and with powerful abilities, are being doomed before the eyes of the world to spiritual and physical extermination. A minority of our people in some countries of western Europe, having won their emancipation through infinite struggles and notable achievements, have to fight bitterly for rights solemnly vouchsafed to them by the constitution of the land. In some countries they afflict them with pogroms and pales of settlement, in others they afflict them with political and social restrictions, and everywhere our people, who as Roman colonists settled in Europe earlier than the nations now ruling it, are made to feel the stinging pain of being in a land that is not theirs.

Every rule, of course, allows of exceptions and the somber picture is not devoid of bright spots. It would be unjust and ungrateful on the part of the Jew to deny or to conceal that, apart from a few European countries with an insignificantly small Jewish population, the Jews in the Anglo-Saxon lands enjoy a better lot. The 250,000 Jews of the British Empire are not only tolerated, but respected. As for this country, there is no right-minded Jew in any part of the world who does not fondly and affectionately think of this great republic, which has given shelter to thousands of his persecuted co-religionists, which has generously heeded the cry addressed to it in the words of the prophet: "Hide the outcast; betray not the fugitive. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; be thou a covert to them from the face of the destroyer" (Isa. xvi, 3, 4). But these few spots of brightness only deepen the darkness of the rest of the picture. The position of the Jewish people as a whole is sad and somber to the extreme, and is aptly typified by the threat involved in God's promise to the Jewish patriarch.

So much for the material position of the Jews. But our nation early realized the truth that "man doth not live by bread alone" (Deut. viii, 3). It is the cruel irony of fate that our people, which as a whole is the poorest of all the nations of the earth, is known to the outside world chiefly through its financiers, while its spiritual strivings, affecting it more deeply than material interests, remain entirely unknown. The best and noblest of our nation are even more deeply concerned about the spiritual fate

of the Jews than about their material misery. The Jewish nation, represented by its best elements, keenly suffers from longings that are not satisfied and hopes that are not fulfilled. They are conscious of the great spiritual powers still latent in our people. They feel that the Jewish nation is still capable of adding an independent current to the stream of human civilization. They fondly think of the prophetic promise that Israel should become a light unto the nations, and they sadly realize that the light still burning in its own midst is constantly dimmed by hatred and persecution. Our nation is anxious to hew out its own path for its national spirit and to develop it on the basis of its own glorious traditions. But hostile surroundings check its development, and, living for the most part in a land that is not theirs, the Jews are forced into a spirit that is not theirs. This spiritual anxiety is not so palpable as is the material discomfort of our nation, but it is no less real and painful.

The thinking Jew of today, thus gravely concerned about the material and spiritual disabilities of his race, looks with feelings of hope and relief toward God's promise to Abraham: "Unto thy seed have I given this land." He realizes that the Jews still have a land that *is* theirs, theirs by right of Divine promise and historical tradition, and he is convinced that, this promise once fulfilled, the Jewish problem would find a final and satisfactory solution. It is this conviction which has found its expression in the movement known as Zionism. It has crystallized the deep, though dim, yearnings and hopes of the Jewish

nation since its dispersion into the sharply defined resolution adopted as the fundamental principle of the movement by the first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897: "Zionism aims at establishing a publicly secured and legally assured home in Palestine." The Zionists who now live in countries where they are treated like citizens are by no means unmindful of their duties toward the lands of their birth or abode. Together with all the Jews they scrupulously heed the advice of the prophet: "And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive; and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. xxix, 7). They cheerfully carry the burdens of the commonwealth to which they belong. They are ready to sacrifice their substance, and, if need be, their lives, for its welfare. But they strive at the same time to create a center for the Jewish nation on its hallowed soil, where its persecuted members shall find refuge from the wrath of the oppressor, where the spirit of Judaism shall develop in accordance with the noblest traditions and ideals of our nation, and where the qualities and abilities of our race shall find their proper channel, and contribute their mite toward the development and betterment of mankind.

The Zionists by no means overlook the difficulties which beset the realization of their hopes. But they know that also their ancestors in Egypt gained their independence after long struggles and trials. They are ready for the sacrifices which their ideal should demand from them. They will do all within their power to transform the hope into a fact. They are

sure of the approval of all right-minded Christians, who cannot but sympathize with a scheme which aims at the re-establishment of Israel in the land of its promise. But, above all, they rely on the Promise itself. They believe that the Covenant between God and Abraham, which assured the Jewish nation of a land even before it was born, will never be broken. "For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed: but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. liv, 10).

V

HEZEKIAH'S GREAT PASSOVER*

THE celebration of the Passover as recorded in the thirtieth chapter of the second Book of Chronicles is one of the most important events in the eventful reign of Hezekiah. In order to comprehend this it is necessary to take a bird's-eye view of the time of Hezekiah, and to consider the general tendencies of that age.

One of the great issues which were successfully fought out in the time of Hezekiah may be characterized as *assimilation versus isolation*. It was the question whether Israel was to be *similar* to the other peoples, merely a unit in the assembly of nations, or whether it was to be an *isolated* people, distinguished and separated in its ideals and practices from the rest of the world. That Israel was a chosen people, superior to all other nations, was flattering enough to recommend itself to every member of the house of Israel. But the character and the content of this superiority or supremacy was a subject of violent discussion. The masses of the people, who always judge by analogies, saw this supremacy in political and material pre-eminence. The spiritual leaders of the people, above all, the prophets, believed, on the other hand, in the spiritual or religious

*Published in the *Sunday School Times* on May 27, 1911, as part of the International Bible Lessons on II Chronicles xxx.

character of Israel's supremacy, and they fought the illusion, ridiculous as well as dangerous, of Israel's political superiority over the other nations with prophetic persistence. For as long as the great empires of antiquity kept beyond Israel's political horizon that illusion could, with some stretch of imagination and self-delusion, be kept alive. But with the appearance of the Assyrian invader on the scene, the illusion of Israel's political pre-eminence was displayed in all its hollowness; and a terrible disappointment, cutting the very life-thread of the people, was bound to follow. Ephraim, which to the very last moment clung to this dangerous illusion, finally lost the vivifying belief in Jewish supremacy altogether, and was ready to yield up its national identity and to assimilate with the other nations. Judah was threatened by the same fate. But at this juncture—it was in the time of Hezekiah—Isaiah arose and promulgated the great doctrine of *She'ar Yashub*, "The Remnant shall return," the idea that Israel's superiority was not political or material, and did not depend on the size of its population and the extent of its territory. "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the Almighty God. For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return" (Isa. x, 21, 22) and, "though a tenth be left in it, it shall be consumed once again; as a teil tree and as an oak, whose stock is left in them when they cast off their leaves, so shall the holy seed be the stock thereof" (Isa. vi, 13).

Long and violent was the struggle between these two opposing tendencies. The destruction of Samaria

in 722 was a brilliant, though bloody, vindication of the prophetic theory. Isaiah lent it the power of his eloquence and personality. Hezekiah, who was a docile pupil of Isaiah, put it into practice. His reign was, with the exception of a few backslidings, one great attempt to realize the prophetic ideal of the Holy Remnant, which keeping away from politics, shall live for the higher ideals of the Jewish people.

Yet another great issue was brought to a peaceful close in the reign of Hezekiah. This issue may be designated by the formula *centralization versus decentralization*. The idea of a Chosen People, which already in its patriarchs was chosen to be God's people on earth, necessarily implies the unity of Israel. The prophets could not but disregard and oppose the differences of tribe and clan. To them Israel was one, as his God was one. And as they recognized but one people, so did they recognize but one religious and political center: the temple at Jerusalem and the dynasty of David. The division of the kingdom did not exist for them. The Mosaic law addresses itself to the nation and not to the tribes. Joshua, though an Ephraimite, is the head of the whole of Israel. Shiloh was to be the central sanctuary of the whole nation. Deborah rises as a "mother in Israel" to unite the tribes for the avenging of Israel. Samuel, reared in the national atmosphere of Shiloh, breaks up the separation of Ephraim by transferring the political center of gravity to the south, to Benjamin and subsequently to Judah. The prophets who lived after the division of the kingdom continued to uphold the ideal of a united Israel. Amos, though a peasant in

Judea, is commanded to leave his flock and to go to Bethel to admonish his northern brethren. Hosea, though a resident of the north, speaks affectionately of the time when even the children of Israel "shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king" (iii, 5). To Isaiah, the contemporary of Hezekiah, the whole existence of the Ephraimites is an anamoly which must soon take an end. His doctrine of the inviolability of Zion is the climax of this prophetic tendency of centralization. "For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion" (xxxvii, 32; II Kings xxxi, 19). "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (ii, 3).

Against this centralizing tendency of Jewish prophecy were arrayed the masses of the people who fondly clung to their tribal traditions and peculiarities. This particularism, visible already in the time of Moses, dominates the whole period of the Judges. Shiloh, which was to be the religious center of the nation, is disregarded and yields its authority to the tribal sanctuaries. Particularly intense is the conflict between the North and the South and their most prominent representatives Ephraim and Judah. Haughty Ephraim, who claimed to be "the Prince of his brethren" (Gen. xlix, 26; Deut. xxxiii, 16), looked down with infinite disdain upon insignificant Judah. In the face of the Philistine danger which threatened the whole nation with destruction, the people united under the leadership of the South. But the union was merely temporary, and the old contrast continued with full vigor. "We have no part in David, neither

have we inheritance in the Son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!" (II Sam. xx, 1; I Kings xii, 16), becomes the war cry of the North. It is stifled by the power of David and the splendor of Solomon, but is raised successfully under the weak Rehoboam.

The development of Judah and Israel after the unfortunate division is like that of two separate nations. The city of Jerusalem, which was to be the national capital, and the temple of Jerusalem, which was to be the national sanctuary, was a menace to tribal independence and was a thorn in the flesh of the citizens of the North. It was therefore the first concern of Jeroboam to counteract this centralizing power of Jerusalem by erecting various sanctuaries for the various tribes. The haughty drunkards of Ephraim despised the house of David and the temple of Jerusalem, and they remained proud to the last, till the crown of pride of Ephraim, to use the language of Isaiah (xxviii, 1, 2), was in a tempest of hail and in a destroying storm cast down to the earth and trodden under foot. The destruction of Samaria, during the reign of Hezekiah, was the triumph of the great ideal of centralization proclaimed by the prophets.

On this historic background the celebration of the Great Passover by Hezekiah stands out in bold relief and assumes a unique significance.

To my mind the significance of the celebration does not lie in its form nor in the change of the date on which it took place, but in the fact that for the first time since the division of the kingdom the proud citizens of the North appeared on the soil of Zion in order to do homage to the house of David and to the temple at Jerusalem.

The event must have taken place shortly after the destruction of Samaria in 722, which marked the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign. Hezekiah, a faithful disciple of Isaiah, regarded it as his life task to carry into reality the ideal of his master. He dispelled the phantom of material superiority, and, discarding politics and diplomacy, devoted himself heart and soul to the organization and centralization of the Holy Remnant on the soil of Zion. This idea of a Remnant assumed immediate reality now that Judah, after the destruction of Samaria, had in itself become a "remnant of Israel." Hezekiah as the king of the Remnant was again the king of the whole nation. Now that the mighty Assyrian had humbled the pride of Ephraim, there was a hope of uniting the whole house of Israel and of restoring once more the authority of the Davidic house and of the holy temple as political and spiritual centers for the whole nation. This effort found expression in the attempt to unite the North and the South in the common celebration of Passover, the great national festival.

Hezekiah then issued a call which was this time addressed not only to the Judaeans, but to Ephraim and Manasseh as well (II Chronicles xxx, 1). The call was sent broadcast all over the territory of united Israel. In order to insure the presence of the Israelites, he sent messengers with letters (v. 6) who "passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, *even unto Zebulun*." This detail is important, for it minutely coincides with the fact reported independently in the Bible (II Kings, xv, 29) that already twelve years previously (in 734) Tiglath-

pileser, the king of Assyria, had invaded the northern territory of Israel and had taken "Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, *all the land of Naphtali*; and carried them captive to Assyria." The messengers therefore stopped at the border of Naphtali. As for the rest of the northern population, we know from the inscriptions of Sargon, the destroyer of Samaria, that in the beginning only 27,290 people were exiled from Samaria, and that the number of those left behind was large enough to justify the appointment of a governor over them.

As for the contents of the letters sent by Hezekiah, they are fully in accord with the historical situation as sketched above. Hezekiah calls upon the northern tribes to submit to the inevitable, to give up their political ambitions, to realize that they are but a remnant, to remember the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is the God of the whole nation, and to acknowledge the authority of the temple of Jerusalem which they had so long resisted. "Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you. . . . And be ye not like your fathers, and like your brethren which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers. . . . Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and *enter his sanctuary which he hath sanctified forever*" (vs. 6-8).

The reception with which the messengers of the Judaean king met was not a hearty one. Too deeply rooted was the pride of Ephraim. "They laughed

them to scorn, and mocked them" (v. 10). Yet the call of Hezekiah was not in vain. The terrible catastrophe brought the better elements of Israel to their senses. "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem" (v. 11); in other words, single individuals from these tribes, to which must be added from verse 18 Ephraim and Issachar, gave up their pride, and were ready to sink their tribal individuality in the larger individuality of a united Israel. They acknowledged the root of the stem of Jesse as the head of the nation, and the temple of Jerusalem as the religious center of the Jewish people.

The ideal of centralization, so long and yet so vainly preached by the prophets, was now a reality. Samaria was lost, but Israel was saved. Great, indeed, must have been the joy of the Judaeans over the return of their estranged brethren. And when the Chronist adds that "since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem," he merely records an historic fact. Ever since the days of the last ruler of the united kingdom no occasion brought the whole house of Israel together as did the celebration of the Great Passover under Hezekiah.

VI

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH*

"THE Prophet Jeremiah"—the mere title solves half of the problem which faces us to-night. The designation of Jeremiah as a prophet at once raises him from the vast plain of the species *homo sapiens* and transfers him to the solitary height occupied by the prophets of Israel. This height is so lofty, so unassailable that it has never been aimed at even by those who attack and sully everything Jewish merely because it is Jewish. Attempts without number have been made to define this unique position of Jewish prophecy. But perhaps we do it best if we simply say: *a prophet is an idealist.*

This at first may sound rather trivial. Even in our materialistic age there are but few who do not claim this title. The man who contributes his mite to relieve distress which is not his own; who devotes a part of his time or energy to a cause that goes beyond his individual needs; who sacrifices an hour of the actual present to listen to the records of the dead past, considers himself, and has in a measure the right to consider himself, an idealist. But idealism and ideals are conceptions capable of endless gradation. They are relative conceptions, being measured

*Paper read before the "Mickve Israel Association" of Philadelphia, on November 20, 1904. Published in the *Jewish Exponent* on November 25, December 2 and 9, 1904.

and defined by their relation to reality. An ideal is determined by its *distance* from reality. An ideal it an ideal only so long as it is *not* reality. As soon as is becomes reality, it ceases to be an ideal. Therefore, the greater the distance separating it from reality, the stronger the efforts and the heavier the sacrifices necessary to obtain it, the loftier is the ideal.

Viewing our problem in this light, we are at once able to appreciate the prophetic ideals. While most of the ideals of our common life are very close to reality, so that the cherished ideals of to-day are the established facts of to-morrow, the ideals of the prophets have remained, after an uninterrupted struggle and development of twenty-five centuries, just as lofty and exalted, just as far removed from reality as they were at the time they were first proclaimed.

Now while an ideal is defined by its *distance* from reality, idealism is defined by its *nearness* to reality. Idealism is the attempt to abolish ideals—by transforming them into reality. Therefore, the greater our effort to bring the ideals in their totality closer to reality, to transform them into facts, the greater our idealism. In this respect, too, prophetic idealism, though substantially the same as that of our common life, differs endlessly in degree from our every day idealism. For while almost everyone considers himself an idealist, yet, at the same time, almost everyone considers himself a practical man, a man who understands life, who knows his age and its circumstances. We hold to our ideals, to be sure, but we are also wise enough not to demand the impossible. We are aware

of the difficulties, we are easily satisfied—and the blazing fire of the ideal is buried beneath the ashes of reality, reduced to a tiny flickering flame.

Such is our idealism. But the idealism of the prophets is of a different calibre altogether. The prophets are essentially *un*practical, and it is cruel irony and an insult to the prophetic name that those who talk and preach so much of prophetic Judaism justify their attitude by practical considerations, by the demands of life and circumstances. The prophets do *not* bargain with life, and do *not* consider age and circumstances. The prophets are without consideration and without compassion. They refuse to regard the consequences of their teachings. Their eye is focused on their ideal, and perceives all things from this angle. Reality is a *quantité negligeable* to them. *We* stand on the ground and try to pull the ideal down to earth, but *their* point of Archimedes is the ideal, and they endeavor to lift the earth up to their ideal. Once the prophet is convinced that absolute justice is the ideal to be striven for,—without regard as to whether a social order is possible through it or not, his maxim becomes: *fiat justitia, pereat mundus!* Once the prophet has recognized the inefficacy of material power, he does not care in the least whether his state or nation will perish. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."[1] At a time when the world resounded with the noise of arms, and the material forces of the nation had to be concentrated on the struggle for its existence, the

[1]Zechariah iv, 6.

prophet exclaimed: "Let not the brave man glory in his bravery, but let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness in the earth."[1] Nay, the prophet does not even regard the laws of nature. Nature herself has to obey his ideals. "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."[2]

But the mere formulation of lofty ideals is not sufficient. A great many thinkers and philosophers among other nations have set forth sublime idealistic theories. History, however, is not made by philosophers, but by martyrs, by men whose lives are an object-lesson of their doctrines. The Jewish prophets were at once thinkers and martyrs. Not only did they think their ideals, they lived their ideals—they lived their ideals because they were not theirs, but God's. The prophet is most intimately connected with God. He is entirely dependent on Him, he feels himself His organ, His vessel. What he thinks, what he does, what he speaks, is really not his, but God's, for "the spirit of the Lord speaketh by me, and His word is on my tongue."[3] Whether he appears before the king to reproach him publicly for his baneful policy, or gives a name to his new-born son, whether he speaks against "nations and kingdoms,"

[1]Jeremiah ix, 22-23.
[2]Isaiah xi, 6.
[3]II Samuel, xxiii, 2.

or enjoys the sight of a simple almond-tree, he is inspired and moved by the spirit of God. Communion with God, a phrase nowadays heard so often from the pulpit, was to the prophets more than a phrase; it was palpable reality which filled their lives and ruled their actions.

What this communion with the Divine really meant, we know not, and, so long as our senses are hedged in by time and space, we shall not know. The believing Jew has at his disposal the vast possibilities which lie between the vision of Ezekiel, who swallows the scroll presented to him by God, and the abstract doctrine of Maimonides who conceives of prophecy as the conjunction of our mind with the Active Intellect of the sublunar world. But the fact as such impresses itself irresistibly upon the mind of everyone who reads and understands the prophets.

Communing with God, being but the vessel, the instrument of the Lord, of the King of Kings, "that created the heavens and stretched them out; that spread forth the earth, and what cometh out of it; that giveth breath unto the people upon it and spirit to them that walk therein,"[1] what does the prophet care for the attacks of men, those poor miserable creatures, whose "foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth"?[2] "If the Lord is on my side, I will not fear; what can men do unto me?"[3] And suppose they do aught to him, suppose they cause

[1]Isaiah xlii, 5.
[2]Job iv, 19.
[3]Psalm cxviii, 6.

him suffering and pain, of what significance is his personal welfare when compared with the Divine task laid upon him? "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting."[1] The prophet is not even proud of his self-sacrifice; he considers it in the nature of things. Nay, he does not complain about it; he is mute,—"he is like a tame lamb that is led to the slaughter."[2] The fear of death and suffering removed, every man becomes a hero. He is not afraid of the tyranny of the king, nor of the greater tyranny of the mob, nor of the still greater tyranny of his own passions. The values and standards of reality lose all their significance. Earth itself becomes so negligible, so featherlight that the prophet thinks it within his reach to lift it to the height of his heavenly ideals.

Have the prophets succeeded in their titanic effort? No, and yes. The ideals of the prophets are still ideals. They have not yet been reached, and perhaps will not be reached until God creates "a new heaven and a new earth," until man ceases to be man, and becomes an angel. But by their gigantic striving towards one extreme they have rescued mankind from another: they have prevented man from remaining a beast and have created—humanity.

Jeremiah then was a prophet. Having stated and defined what this term implies, we have suggested a solution for only half of our problem. We now have

[1]Isaiah l, 6.
[2]Jeremiah xi, 19.

to attack the second half: the individual peculiarities of the prophet known as Jeremiah. There were only a few great prophets, but every one of them—as is only natural with great men—is a distinct and well-defined personality. Maimonides enumerates eleven degrees of prophecy. The Talmud goes further and emphasizes the individualism of Jewish prophecy with epigrammatic pithiness: "One style is common to many prophets, but there are not two prophets who employ the same style."[1] The Divine element, the consciousness of God, the communion with God, are common to all the prophets, but every one of them has a sharply marked individuality in which he differs from all the others, this difference being determined, as is the case with every man, by place, time, and environment.

Viewing Jeremiah as an individuality, and comparing him with the other great prophets, I believe we may say, if we be permitted to apply ordinary standards to extraordinary phenomena, that Jeremiah was the sublimest of the prophets. It almost looks as if Providence had intended to gather all the rays of prophecy into one focus in order to illumine the struggle and downfall of Judea. This unique distinction of Jeremiah is the result not only of unparalleled endowments of soul and character, but also of the time in which the prophet lived. His age was one of the stormiest periods in the annals of Israel as well as in the general destinies of the Orient. It seems as if History had been anxious to furnish a

[1]Sanhedrin 89a.

worthy background for this great personality. The year of the first prophetic call of Jeremiah (626 B. C. E.) is the year of death of the last great king of Assyria, of Assurbanipal, or, as the Greeks called him, Sardanapalus. His demise marks the beginning of the rapid decline of the powerful empire which for many centuries had ruled and oppressed the whole of Western Asia. The decline of Assyria is accompanied by the rise of other great empires, competing with Assyria: of Egypt, of Media, and, over and above all, of the Chaldeans. Their leader Nebuchadnezzar, the Asiatic Napoleon, aided by the Medes, succeeds in crushing the Assyrian empire and in destroying their capital Nineveh. The Egyptian Pharaoh, who tried to contest Nebuchadnezzar's victories, is overwhelmingly defeated, and the Chaldean conqueror governs the destinies of Western Asia as far as the Mediterranean.

It is but natural that the land in which and for which our prophet was active should have been vitally affected by these occurrences. The first years of Jeremiah coincide with the last years of Manasseh, the cruel tyrant, who had submitted not only to Assyrian rule, but also to Assyrian cult and culture, and had mercilessly persecuted everything that was Jewish. His successor Amon was killed in a rebellion, having reigned for only two years. Under his successor Josiah conditions became more tolerable, owing to the decline of the Assyrian empire, which was no more able to interfere with its dependencies. Josiah devoted himself to the improvement of the inner conditions, and more especially of the religious life

of his country. But instead of Assyria, Egypt arose. Josiah was venturesome enough to face the Egyptian sovereign. The decision took place on the plain of Megiddo (608 B. C. E.). Josiah was killed, his army destroyed, and Pharaoh dethroned and enthroned the kings of Judah.

The victory of Nebuchadnezzar over Pharaoh at the battle of Carchemish (605 B. C. E.) throws Palestine like a ball into the hands of the Chaldeans. King Jehoiakim, incited by the Egyptians, makes an attempt to throw off the Chaldean yoke, but, with the rapidity of a whirlwind, the army of Nebuchadnezzar appears before the gates of Jerusalem. Jehoiakim dies during the siege. His successor Jeconiah surrenders to the Chaldeans, and is carried off to Babylonia, together with the aristocracy and the most influential classes of the population, among them the prophet Ezekiel. Zedekiah takes possession of the fatal inheritance. He, too, is seduced by deceitful Egypt to rebel against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar again appears before Jerusalem. There follows a desperate siege lasting one year and a half, with the result that the country is subdued, the city and temple destroyed, and the people carried into captivity. Only a small remnant stays in the country. Nebuchadnezzar is tolerant enough to grant them a certain amount of autonomy, under the governorship of Gedaliah ben Achikam. But soon afterwards the Chaldean governor is killed by his envious rivals, and the last spark of Judah's independence is extinguished.

Such was the background of Jeremiah's activity, a dark and dismal background. Gloomy clouds hover

on the horizon. The storm is raging, lightning flashes, the thunder roars, thrones are crumbling, kingdoms are falling to pieces, but upon this somber background stands out the luminous figure of Jeremiah. The light radiated by his personality penetrates the darkness, and his mighty voice sounds louder than the storm.

But more than by the extraordinary conditions of his time, Jeremiah is distinguished by the unusual traits of his character. The gravity of the circumstances of his age throws into still bolder relief the wonderful softness of his heart. There is a tenderness, nay, a sweetness about his soul that cannot be surpassed. "My bowels, my bowels! I tremble, O the walls of my heart! My heart groans within me, I have no peace!"[1] His feelings are like the strings of an Aeolian harp that vibrate and resound when touched by the lightest breeze. He feels his communion with God more vividly than the other prophets, and he describes it in terms unparalleled for depth and sincerity. But just as he loves his God so does he love his people, and words of deepest tenderness flow now and then from the otherwise scornful lips of the prophet. And the man with such a soul and such depth of sentiment is destined continually to curse his people and to prophesy its destruction, and not only to prophesy it, but to live it, to live it and to feel it with every fibre of his soul, long, long before it actually occurred. There is a profound and touching tragedy about Jeremiah, a tragedy that unfolds itself to its full extent in the different stages of his career.

[1] iv, 19.

The circumstances of Jeremiah's life are known to us in greater detail than those of any other prophet. The reason for it is not far to seek. Jeremiah's activities were intimately bound up with the history of his period which was filled with stirring and crucial events and was for this reason better preserved in the memory of posterity. For this very same reason it is not surprising that we are almost entirely unacquainted with the purely personal facts of his life. Even the date of his birth and death have not been transmitted to us, as though to indicate that these human facts are entirely immaterial in the case of a prophet who is but the mouthpiece of God. The chronological order of the book of Jeremiah is equally disputable. We are therefore compelled to fill the void by conjectures, but conjectures based on probability.

As was stated a moment ago, the exact date of Jeremiah's birth has not been reported to us. Yet there is reason to assume that it took place during the last years of Manasseh's reign (about 646 B. C. E.). He was born in Anatoth, a little town not far from Jerusalem, inhabited almost entirely by a priestly population. Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyahu, belonged to a priestly family and probably received a priestly education. But his whole disposition of mind and soul fitted him for prophecy. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."[1] I think we have

[1] i, 5.

to picture to ourselves the prophet Jeremiah as a precocious thoughtful lad who takes everything seriously, and considers everything maturely. He does not care for the games and pleasures of boyhood: "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced. I sat alone because of thy might; for thou hast filled me with indignation."[1]

The times were serious and were apt to make even less thoughtful persons think. The effects of the tyranny of Manasseh, whose "sword had devoured the prophets like a destroying lion,"[2] were still keenly felt. The prophetic party was bitterly persecuted and the prophets themselves had to go into hiding. Fortunately the prophetic writings could not be suppressed and Jeremiah undoubtedly read them. He could not help comparing the ideals as pictured by the prophets with the real world around him, and thus recognizing the immeasurable gulf separating them. His countrymen, the priests,—how far were they from being what they should have been! Instead of guiding the people towards justice and righteousness, they lured them towards sin and transgression. Sincerity was replaced by hollow arrogance. With all their wickedness, the leaders of the people were not ashamed to boast: "We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us,"[3]—a boast that prompts the bitter repartee of the prophet: "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and caught. Lo! they have re-

[1] xv, 17.
[2] ii, 30.
[3] viii, 8.

jected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?"[1] Instead of sanctity and lofty idealism, he sees only mean quarrels and low rivalries, gossip, slander and jealousy. "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother acteth subtly, and every neighbor goeth about with slanders. And they deceive every one his neighbor and truth they speak not. . . . Their tongue is a sharpened arrow that speaketh deceit. With his mouth one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor but in his heart he layeth wait for him. Shall I not punish them for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"[2] The God of justice cannot withhold his punishment from these treacherous leaders who trample justice under foot. Chastisement must come and will come, and the sensitive ear of the prophet begins to listen.

Far away in Assyria things are topsy-turvy. The Scythians have left their habitations and stream across the boundaries of Assyria, roaming as far as Northern Palestine. "Thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."[3] In this state of mind, full of apprehensions and forebodings, the prophet walks among the fields, where he would often rove about, where every leaf and blade would reflect his own thoughts and sentiments. Suddenly his eye perceives an almond tree, the first tree to blossom in the spring. Thousands of people had

[1] viii, 9.
[2] ix, 3, 4, 7, 8.
[3] iv, 19.

probably passed the same tree, and had seen nothing. But to the prophet it reveals its mystery. "Jeremiah, what seest thou?" asks the voice of God. "I see the rod of an almond tree." "Thou hast seen well, Jeremiah, for, like the early blossoming almond-tree, will I hasten my word to perform it early."[1] Jeremiah continues his walk. In the north he sees a pot boiling on the fire. And God asks him again: "What seest thou?" "I see a seething pot in the direction of the north." "Out of the north, is the answer of God, the evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land."[2] And Jeremiah suddenly becomes aware that the punishment is approaching, and that he is to be a prophet destined to proclaim it in the name of God. He, almost a child, tender, shy, sentimental, who had never dared utter a word in public, is now to appear before the people, to warn them, to reproach them and to threaten them with a fate the mere anticipation of which is apt to break his heart. And Jeremiah objects: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child." "Say not I am a child, for to whomsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. . . . I have made thee this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to deliver thee."[3]

[1] i, 11-12.
[2] i, 13-14.
[3] i, 6-7; 18-19.

Suddenly, he feels as if somebody had touched his lips, and in the twinkling of an eye the boy becomes a man, the shy sentimental lad a hero, the bashful youth an orator, whose words are like fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.[1] He returns to his town and begins to prophesy, to exhort his townsmen and to warn them, and to proclaim the adversity that is approaching.

Nobody is a prophet in his own country, because nobody likes to be governed by one who has been his equal, or his inferior. It can, therefore, be easily imagined how astonished, how amazed were the leaders of the town. How dare this insignificant young man give them advice,—them, the representatives of God on earth, the pillars of religion, the "holders of the Law?" Down with this traitor who predicts the destruction of his own country! "Prophesy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand!"[2] The prophet, of course, would not stop his prophecies, and some of his countrymen actually formed a plot to get rid of him. If our explanation of a verse in Jeremiah[3] be correct, they actually put poison in his food.

Such was the beginning of Jeremiah's activity, a not very encouraging beginning, as one can see. But his hope is not lost. The little town of Anatoth is not Judea. Perhaps it is the pettiness of conditions in a small town, the lack of culture, the narrowness of

[1]Compare xxiii, 29.
[2]xi, 21.
[3]xi, 19.

life that produces this stubbornness of heart. But there, not very far off, is the capital of Judea, is Jerusalem, the city of the Lord, "beautiful for its situation, the joy of the whole earth,"[1] where the sanctuary of the nation is situated, where the priests and Levites serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness, where God speaks through his prophets from the early morning till the late evening,—in Jerusalem no doubt every one is a saint, a man of God; there his ideals are facts, are reality.

Trembling with hope and awe, the young prophet enters the gates of the capital. For days he walks about in the streets of Jerusalem, like Diogenes, searching for a man. But what is it? Is it possible? Is it conceivable? Why, the people of Jerusalem are not better than the people of Anatoth! "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her. And though they say, 'as the Lord liveth,' surely they swear falsely. . . . They have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return."[2] The prophet is almost crushed by his experience. But perhaps only the masses are so, and a people need not be judged by its masses. "And I said: surely, these are poor. They are ignorant, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the ordinance of their God. I will

[1]Psalm xlviii, 2.
[2]v, 1-3.

get me unto the great men and will speak unto them; for they know the way of the Lord and the ordinance of their God. But these, too, have broken the yoke, and burst their bonds."[1]

But not only the so called great, or, as we now say, the big men are thoroughly wicked, —the official representatives of religion are not a whit better. "Both prophet and priest are ungodly; yea, in my House have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord."[2] "Even in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies, and they strengthen the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. . . . Because of the prophets my heart within me is broken. All my bones shake, I am like a drunken man, like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of his holy words. . . . From the prophets of Jerusalem is ungodliness gone forth into all the land."[3] The fountainhead of holiness as the fountainhead of wickedness—who can describe or fathom the despair of our prophet? To whom shall he speak? To whom shall he prophesy? To the dumb masses who are not able to hear, whose ear is uncircumcised, who *cannot* hearken?[4] Or to the crafty priests and prophets who are not *willing* to listen? Why shall he suffer, why shall he sacrifice his life for a task that can never be accomplished, nay, that cannot even be begun? He

[1]v, 4-5.
[2]xxiii, 11.
[3]xxiii,, 14, 9, 15.
[4]Compare vi, 10.

falls a victim to despair, he curses the day of his birth: "Cursed be the day wherein I was born; the day wherein my mother bore me let it not be blessed. . . . Why did he not slay me from the womb, that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always great? Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed in shame?"[1]

He is determined to cast off the burden of prophecy that causes him such nameless pain. His mind is made up. But something strange is happening to him. He *cannot* live without prophecy. He is deprived of life if he is deprived of prophecy. The pain without it is greater than the pain with it. Now the real meaning of prophecy begins to dawn upon him. A struggle follows, and in the end he decides to remain true to his calling, which is his life. He now realizes that his personal suffering and unhappiness are of no account in comparison with his own overwhelming happiness in proclaiming the word of God. "Thou hast enticed me, O Lord, and I was enticed; Thou art stronger than I, and Thou hast prevailed. I have become a laughing-stock daily, everyone mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out, I cry 'violence and spoil'; because the word of the Lord is made a reproach unto me, and a derision all the day. And if I say: 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name,' then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I weary myself to hold it in, but cannot."[2] But when

[1] xx, 14, 17-18.
[2] xx, 7-9.

he did prophecy then "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart, because Thy name was called on me, O Lord, God of Hosts."[1] Now he is reconciled to his fate. Now he is truly a prophet, and, hovering between the tortures and the delights of his vocation, *Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu Tode betruebt*, he again applies himself to the task of fighting the world, a mean, contemptible, yet powerful world, with the word of God as the only weapon in his hands.

There was a brief moment in the lifetime of Jeremiah when a feeble ray pierced the gloomy clouds in the skies of Judea. It was in the year 621, when King Josiah, who was a well-meaning and religious man, moved by the discovery of an old law book in the Temple, resolved to introduce reforms and change the social and religious conditions of the country. At first, Jeremiah seems to have encouraged these reforms, but he very soon found out the truth. As in the case of nearly all reforms which are introduced artificially, the reforms of Josiah, too, merely tapped the surface. As far as the reforms introduced into the cult were concerned, the people seemed readily satisfied. They rolled their eyes piously and exclaimed hypocritically: *Hekhal Adonai, Hekhal Adonai, Hekhal Adonai*! "The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!"[2] But when the reforms went deeper and touched their social and family life, demanding sacrifices and priva-

[1] xv, 16.
[2] vii, 4.

tions, then they rebelled and remained exactly what they had been before, and religion was buried in the luxurious halls of the Temple.

The wickedness of the people, particularly of its upper classes, is pictured by Jeremiah in the gloomiest colors. I do not for a moment believe that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were worse than the population of any civilized city of to-day. If anything they were probably much better. This is shown by the fact that they did not lynch the prophet the first time he denounced them. But they were weighed in the scale of prophetic idealism, and it was but natural that they were found wanting. The prophet unceasingly and untiringly scolds them and curses them; he seems in very truth "a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth."[1]

Yet occasionally, perhaps when the prophet is least aware of it, he drops a few words that grant us a glimpse into his very heart, revealing an abyss of love and tenderness. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord: I remember thee the affection of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."[2] "Is Ephraim not a darling son unto me? is he not a child that is daudled? For as often as I speak of him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my heart yearneth for him; I will surely have compassion upon him, saith the Lord."[3] "For the hurt of the daughter

[1] xv, 10.
[2] ii, 2.
[3] xxxi, 20.

of my people am I seized with anguish. I am black. Appalment hath taken hold on me. . . . Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"[1] He loves his nation with all the intensity of which his prophetic soul is capable, and yet he sees the catastrophe coming nearer and nearer. He sees it, and he cannot avert it. He applies to God himself and tries to use his influence with Him as a prophet, but he is not even allowed to pray for his people. "Therefore pray thou not for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee."[2] He sees the approaching calamity with perfect clearness, and, while the false prophets are trying to deceive the people and themselves, crying *Shalom*! *Shalom*! "All's well! All's well!", he feels and lives the destruction of his people with nameless pain.

At first Jeremiah does not yet know when and by whom the punishment will be inflicted. There is even a possibility for his people to avert their fate if they will but abandon their wickedness. When Josiah had been killed by Pharaoh Necho at the battle of Megiddo (608 B. C. E.), and the people had streamed into the Temple from all parts of the country Jeremiah declared in a famous discourse: "Amend your ways and your doings and I will allow you to dwell in this place."[3] The people, of course,

[1]viii, 21, 13.
[2]vii, 16.
[3]vii, 3.

did not amend their ways and their doings, and the calamity had to take its course. But when a few years later the great struggle between Egypt and Babylon had begun, and the people were filled with false hopes, Jeremiah at once recognized the man who was to determine the fate of his nation. Nebuchadnezzar was to be the instrument of God to punish his people. The battle of Carchemish in 605, in which the Egyptian army was disastrously defeated, justified his anticipations. Jeremiah's mind is now so thoroughly made up about the future destinies of his people that, following the Divine command, he puts his prophecies in writing for generations to come.[1] He is able to lay down a definite program. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy Jerusalem and carry the Judeans into captivity. Resistance to the Babylonian conqueror is not only useless, it is pernicious, because it destroys the national energy, instead of preserving it.

Not that Jeremiah believed that the Jews had to be dispersed among the nations in order to teach them, or that they could perform their mission only by disappearing among them, but, on the contrary, because he was convinced that even in their dispersion they ought to be concentrated, so that, improved and uplifted, they might return to their ancient land. As if to refute the doctrine which looks upon the dispersion of Israel as the consummation of its national hopes, Jeremiah went out of his way at a critical juncture in the affairs of Judea to buy a piece of land

[1]Chapter xxxvi.

around Anatoth,[1] thereby emphasizing his conviction that their stay in the land of the stranger would only be of short duration. From this standpoint, and from this standpoint alone—the hope for the Return—he calls upon the men of the first captivity under Jehoiachin (597), whom he considers the better part of the nation—he calls them the better figs[2]—to establish themselves in the land of Exile. "Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and daughters; and multiply ye there and be not diminished."[3]

From that time on Jeremiah indefatigably demands surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. It can be easily imagined that it was not quite harmless to preach submission in the capital. More then once Jeremiah was in danger of his life. Not only the officials, who were perfectly right from their point of view, but even the priests and prophets were eager to get rid of a dangerous rival. On one occasion he was practically doomed, and only the quick action of an Ethiopean slave saved him at the last moment.[4] But then why should he have feared death, he who had been fervently praying for the end of his sufferings? Nay, not even the burning shame, a thousand times bitterer then death, that he who had sacrificed

[1]Chapter xxxii.
[2]xxiv, 5.
[3]xxix, 5-6.
[4]Chapter xxxviii.

life and happiness for his nation should be branded as a traitor to it, was able to prevent him from doing his duty.

Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem. The inhabitants offer a most desperate resistance, and Jeremiah languishes in prison, fettered like an ordinary criminal, and preaches the uselessness of defence. King Zedekiah, laying aside his dignity, sends a special messenger to the jailed prophet, but, instead of a favorable reply, he receives the answer: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the King of Babylon. . . And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm."[1] A short time later the king in person calls upon him secretly in prison, but the prophet is inexorable: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel, if thou wilt go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire. . . . But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand."[2]

Subsequent events justified the prophet. The national strength had been uselessly wasted. Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city, burnt the temple, inflicted cruel punishment on the king, and carried the people to Babylon. Now that justice has been

[1] xxi, 4, 5.
[2] xxxviii, 17, 18.

done, and the sins of the people have been expiated through suffering, Jeremiah's conscience is appeased. There is no further necessity or opportunity for him to scold and to curse, and the prophet of wrath becomes a prophet of love. Words of unfathomable devotion and affection accompany the Jewish captives on their way to the far-off exile. "Thus saith the Lord: Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout at the head of the nations. Announce ye, praise ye, and say: 'O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.' Behold, I will bring them from the North country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth, with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together, a great company shall they return hither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters, in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble. For I am become a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first-born. . . . They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow unto the goodness of the Lord, to the corn, and to the wine, and to the oil, and to the young of the flock and of the herd, and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not pine any more. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old together. For I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow."[1]

Among those that were carried away to Babylonia was Jeremiah himself. He came as far as Ramah,

[1]xxxi, 7-9; 12-13.

at no great distance from Jerusalem. There he was released by the Babylonians who had probably heard of his efforts in their favor. He was a free man. He was at liberty to go to Babylon where he was assured of Nebukadnezzar's favor, where he might have lived at the royal palace, enjoyed life and perhaps written at ease the history of the last struggle of his nation, as did Josephus many centuries afterwards. But Jeremiah was a prophet, and he did not live for himself but for his people. His mind was soon made up. He remained in his devastated land and went to Mizpah where the governorship of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, offered at least the feeble prospect of an independent national existence.

This hope was speedily shattered. Gedaliah was murdered by one of his countrymen. The people were threatened by the anger of the Babylonian emperor who was sure to wreak vengeance on them for the murder of his governor. They therefore planned to flee to Egypt, and they came to Jeremiah for advice. It was a desperate dilemma. On the one hand, there was the danger of cruel punishment at the hands of the Babylonian king; on the other hand, there was the risk of sealing the doom of the country by depopulating it. Ten days the prophet had to wait for an answer from God.[1] When the answer finally came it was a command to stay where they were: the interests of the country were to be regarded above the interests of the individual.

The people evidently did not subscribe to that principle. Despite their solemn assurance to accept

[1]xliii, 7.

the decision of Jeremiah, they fled to Egypt and carried off the aged prophet with them. There they cut the thread which had connected them with their home land and their religion. They rapidly fell back into the crassest forms of idolatry. They worshipped the goddess Ishtar, "the Queen of Heaven," and the women, assisted by the men, baked sacrificial cakes for her, vulgarly boasting that they were so much better off now in their idolatry than they had ever been before. We can vividly imagine the feelings of the prophet when he witnessed the backsliding of his people, having spent a life of struggle and suffering in their service. With all the energy which the hoary prophet can command he violently protests against this utter disregard of his life-work. He prophesies the disappearance of Judaism in Egypt: "Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be uttered in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, 'as the Lord liveth.' Behold, I shall watch over them for evil, and not for good; and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them."[1]—and with a curse on his lips Jeremiah disappears from our view.

As for his end, we know as little about his death as we know about his birth. A late legend narrates that he was killed by his own fellow-Jews in Egypt. The legend is psychologically true. It was the proper finale of a life of unselfish devotion. It must

[1]xliv, 26-27.

have been rapture for Jeremiah to die for his people for which he had done infinitely more—for which he had lived.

The life work of Jeremiah seemed to be lost. But it was not. It bore fruit a thousandfold. The exiles in Babylonia, "the better figs," followed the prophet's advice, established themselves in the new country and gathered new strength for the future. They began to ponder over their past. They realized that a great task had been laid upon them and that they had neglected it, and what the most eloquent words of the prophet were powerless to accomplish was brought about by bitter experience in the land of exile. When Cyrus issued the decree permitting the Jews to return to Palestine and restore their old commonwealth, there was a small but God-inspired remnant which was prepared to make its way homeward. Ezra, the second Moses, gave the old-new state its constitution. He understood that prophetic Judaism was indispensable as an ideal, as a stimulus, as a guidance, but that it was too lofty and exalted to serve as a lever in the grey everyday existence of man, and he, therefore, proceded to turn the solid goldbars of prophecy into small coin. In this new form the prophetic ideals gained wide currency among the Jewish people; they became an integral part of its spiritual life, and Judaism was saved. Thus Jeremiah's life and work continue to pour forth their blessings through various channels, and it may after all be due to his influence if, at this tremendous distance of time and space, we are gathered here in America, animated by a new spirit and filled with a new hope for a Jewish future, and hearken to the words of the Prophet Jeremiah.

VII

THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW*

FROM the early days of antiquity down to our own times the Jews have stood forth like a sphynx in the midst of humanity. It was not national conceit nor hankering after notoriety which made them appear in this singular role. It was rather the grave and profound realization of their innermost nature which forced upon them the consciousness of being an exceptional, a Chosen, people. And not only the Jews themselves, but even the nations, whose sentiments towards the Jews were far from friendly, could not suppress a feeling of astonishment and wonderment in the face of this singular exemplar of a national group—a feeling which already in the early beginnings of the Jewish race found expression in the pregnant words of the heathen prophet: "Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be counted among the nations" (Numbers xxiii, 9).

These words of a pagan seer of thousands of years ago, which define the true nature of Israel far more

*Lecture delivered at the opening of the Hebrew Courses for Adults in Berlin (Germany) on May 1, 1899. Published in German in *Israelitischer Lehrer und Cantor*, monthly supplement to the *Juedische Presse* (Berlin), Nos. 9, 10 and 11 (October 5, November 2 and December 1, 1899.)

accurately than the latter day attempts to squeeze this unique phenomenon into the conventional framework of human groupings, come back to us forcibly tonight as we are assembled in the metropolis of German civilization, at the eventide of the century of steam and electricity, to resume the study of a language whose beginnings are lost in the gray dawn of history and whose traces carry us back to the pasture lands of Mesopotamia. Seldom, if ever, has a people or a language made such a gigantic excursion across the expanses of time and space as has the people and the language of the Hebrews. To be sure, in the course of the nineteenth century the hieroglyphic monument of Egypt and the cuneiform writings of Assyria and Babylonia have shaken off the dust under which they had been buried throughout the ages, and moved from their resting places in the far-off East into the cabinets of European and American scholars. But these relics of a dead past have never risen to *life*. They are scientific corpses, the object of the anatomist's scalpel which serves purely academic interests, whereas the Hebrew language stands before us as a *living* organism, full of youth and vigor, striving with irrepressible energy after new forms of expression, and not only looking backward upon a venerable past but also looking forward to a glorious future. The destinies of this unique phenomenon in the linguistic annals of humanity may be appropriately recalled on this occasion, by way of introduction to the Hebrew Courses for the opening of which we are gathered here tonight.

The Hebrew language, as is known to all of you, is a member of the Semitic group of human speech. Its

next of kin is Aramaic, which by its plainness of form and simplicity of expression was particularly fitted to become the medium of daily intercourse among large sections of humanity and in this capacity actually proved a dangerous rival of Hebrew throughout the centuries. At a somewhat further distance stands Arabic, with which Hebrew has cultivated an intimate relationship during various stages of its history. Ethiopic, the language of ancient Abessynia, and the Assyro-Babylonian language, represented on the cuneiform monuments, which, despite their linguistic kinship to Hebrew, have not influenced the latter to any appreciable extent, may be left out of consideration in the following account.

The beginnings of Hebrew, as was intimated above, lose themselves in pre-historic times. But, judging by analogy, we may confidently assert that the Hebrew language, long before its manifestation in literary form, served as a vehicle of the spoken word. The first *written* monuments of the Hebrew tongue are embodied in the Scriptures.[1] The Bible—this no serious student will deny—forms but a part, or, more correctly, a fraction of the ancient national literature of the Hebrews. Yet, even in this curtailed form the Bible stands forth, to use the apt metaphor of a recent writer, as the "Sun of the World's Literature," and even those who refuse to see in it a divinely inspired book place it in the fore-front of man's

[1] The so-called linguistic glosses in the Tell-Amara Tablets are Canaanitish, and not Hebrew.

literary achievements as the ethical manual of the human race.

It is true, attempts have been made to contest the uniqueness of the biblical writings by setting up against them the writings of ancient Greece. But the Bible has no reason to fear this comparison. No one will deny that the literary manifestations of the Greek genius have affected profoundly the civilization of the world, and the Sun of Homer, to use Schiller's well-known phrase, equally smiles upon us. But we must not forget that the Sun of Homer smiles only upon the fortunate few who enjoy life's external graces, whereas the Sun of the Bible penetrates into the proudest palaces and the humblest shanties; that the Sun of Homer smiles, spreading a bewitchingly beautiful glimmer over the surface of life, whereas the Sun of the Bible radiates warmth and strength, and has called into being a system of morality, which has become the cornerstone of human civilization.

Now while it is the incomparable content which stamps, the period of biblical literature as the classic era in the history of Hebrew, this is no less true of the form, of the language, in which that literature is couched. The whole freshness and vigor of a soil which once upon a time flowed with milk and honey and the whole loftiness and strength of the cedars of Lebanon are mirrored in this language, marked as it is by hammering force and captivating charm at one and the same time.

However, this happy condition lasted only so long as the Hebrew language was able to draw the natural juices from its native soil. In the sixth century

before the Common Era Hebrew received the first dangerous shock. After a desperate struggle, Judah and Jerusalem were subdued by Nebukadnezzar and the Jews were transplanted to Babylonia. The national edifice of Israel and the structure of its tongue were shaken by tremendous convulsions. The Hebrew language seemed to breathe forth its soul in heart-rending lamentations, and the inspired Levites, who but a little while ago had sung the praise of the Lord in triumphant psalms, now sat weeping by the rivers of Babylon, and, hanging their harps upon the willows, indignantly protested: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"

And while the pious Levites refused to touch the Hebrew lyre for fear of violating the sanctity of the national tongue, the people at large turned away from the language of their fathers, prompted by considerations of a less lofty nature. It would seem that already then a goodly part of the Judean captives in Babylonia exchanged their ancestral Hebrew for the more convenient Aramaic, which had gained wide currency in the Babylonian empire and also served as a vehicle of diplomatic intercourse throughout the lands of Western Asia. It was the first manifestation of the process of disintegration which made these captives eventually disappear in the surging sea of Eastern humanity.

Fortunately, however, there was a faithful remnant which was steadfast in its loyalty to the religious and national traditions of Judaism and, responding to the noble summons of Cyrus, the conqueror of the Babylonian world power, was courageous enough

to return to the desolate land of their fathers and, in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, lay the foundations for a new Jewish commonwealth. Needless to say the national language returned with the exiles to its ancient soil. But the hardships of the transplantation and the sojourn in an Aramaic-speaking environment for two generations were bound to leave their impress upon its development. The influence of Aramaic is clearly discernible in the language of the new commonwealth, and, instead of the lofty cedars of the Lebanon, the mournful willows of Babylon are now reflected in it.

Yet, even in this post-exilic stage, which, in contradistinction from the preceding golden age, has been called the silver age of the Hebrew language, the national literature of the Jews can boast of writings which may fully claim their place side by side with the most perfect achievements of the earlier period. It was about the same time that Ezra, the second Moses, as he was appropriately styled by subsequent generations, instituted a custom which at first sight seems of no particular consequence and which nevertheless proved of decisive importance for the future of Judaism and, more especially, for the preservation of the Hebrew language. We refer to the practice of reading the Law in the original Hebrew as part of public worship on the official day of rest, the Sabbath, as well as on Mondays and Thursdays when the people congregated in their market places for the exchange of their wares. As a result of this simple custom, the Hebrew language has been enshrined in the scrolls of the Law, and the parchment of the Torah has

rendered the sacred tongue immune against the ravages of time and has enabled it to pass unscathed through the flames of hatred and persecution which threatened to destroy it.

Yet, successful though Ezra was in implanting the Hebrew language in the hearts of the Jewish people, he was powerless to prevent its disappearance from the mouths of the Jews. For the Aramaic language, being pliable and adaptable, took an ever firmer hold of the lower classes of the people and soon became their vernacular. The upper classes continued to speak Hebrew, which also remained the literary language of the Jews, until the second century after the Common Era. The so-called Apocrypha, which mostly date from that period, were originally written in Hebrew, though, characteristically enough they were soon lost in the original and are preserved only in their Greek translations. The text of one of these Apocrypha, the "Wisdom of Sira," was but recently discovered by Professor Schechter and exhibits a pure and vigorous Hebrew.

The most important literary monument of the post-exilic silver age is the Mishna, written in a Hebrew which, despite the copious admixture of foreign elements, particularly of Greek and Latin origin, represents a natural and organic development of the biblical idiom. However, the inroads of Aramaic become more and more threatening. The Jewish people which, groaning under the heavy yoke of Rome, had to strain every nerve in order to maintain its bare life was not in a position to watch over the purity of its national tongue. As a result, Aramaic

presses more and more forward until it gradually forces its way into the exclusive circles of the learned and the sacred precincts of literature. On the vast Aramaic expanse of Talmudic literature one encounters but casually refreshing oases of Hebrew. True, in some lands of the Diaspora, whither the Jews had been scattered after the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth, we witness the slow beginnings of a Neo-Hebraic literature, but in the center of Judaism, which was now located in Babylonia, governed at that time by the Neo-Persians, Aramaic, which was predominant in vast sections of the Neo-Persian empire, remained the spoken and written language of the Jews. This state of affairs continued until the seventh century after the Common Era when the Arabic hordes, with the irresistible enthusiasm of youth, overran the decrepit Neo-Persian world power and, with the sword of the prophet in their hands, made it subject to the new faith. Age-worn Aramaic is swept away by the rising wave, and its place is taken by young and vigorous Arabic.

Ere long the Jews of Babylonia, too, began to speak the kindred language of the Prophet of Medina. In the tenth century Arabic is so firmly entrenched in Babylonian Jewry that a man of the calibre of Saadia Gaon writes his works in Arabic. One of Saadia's principal achievements is his translation of the Bible into Arabic, by means of which he hoped to lead back the new generation of Jews to their most treasured possessions. Through these endeavors, and even more so under the stimulus of the Karaitic schism which had taken place somewhat earlier, the seeds

were planted for a new future of the Hebrew language. The Karaites who repudiated the Talmudic writings and recognized the Bible as their only source of religious authority were naturally impelled to apply themselves with particular fervor to the study of the only sacred monument they now possessed; the slogan given out by their founder was, therefore, "Search diligently in the Holy Writ!" The Rabbanites, however, as the adherents of traditional Judaism were now termed, refused to be outdone by their opponents, and, as a result, a rivalry sprang up, noble in its motives as well as in its accomplishments, which ushered in a new classic era for the Hebrew language, an era in which philology, literature and poetry blossomed forth in unprecedented magnificence.[1]

The seeds of this new culture attained to their fullest bloom in another land of Islam, in Moorish Spain, which, beginning with the tenth century, gradually became the leading center of Judaism. One has to pile color upon color in order to throw upon the canvas a semblance of the splendor which surrounded that glorious period. The luxurious magnificence of the Orient, the grave earnestness of Judaism and the well-poised cheerfulness of Hellas,—all of them met in the focus of Jewish-Arabic culture, which for more than three centuries stands forth as the second classic period in the history of the Hebrew

[1Modern scientific research is inclined to question the effect of Karaism upon the development of Neo-Hebraic culture in the lands of Islam, considering this culture rather the work of internal orces within Judaism.]

language. There was not a single branch of human or divine knowledge, not a single department in the intellectual laboratory of man which was not cultivated with love and assiduity within the confines of Hebrew literature. A wonderful galaxy of Hebrew writers, poets and scholars moves across our field of vision. Nevertheless, the spoken language of the Jews was as theretofore Arabic, which is also used as a literary medium side by side with Hebrew. Judah Halevi and Moses Maimonides may serve as a typical illustration of this linguistic partnership. The former, "star and beacon of his age," the classic singer of Zion's joy and sorrow, as well as the latter, styled and considered "the Glory of his Generation," whose Hebrew code of laws towers mountain-like over the literature of post-biblical Judaism, wrote their philosophic works in Arabic. The reason for this curious phenomenon may, at least in part, be safely sought in the difficulty of discussing problems of abstract thought in Hebrew, which seemed more fitted for the description of concrete objects. Yet, the verdict of history, which is the inexorable judge of human achievements, implies a severe condemnation of their timidity. For whereas the Hebrew versions of the philosophic writings of that period, circulating in ever new editions among the Jews of the entire globe, have been instrumental in stimulating and purifying the religious thought of Judaism and, in spite of their exceedingly uncouth linguistic form, have proved the stepping stone for the modern philosophic Hebrew style in which the subtlest subjects of inquiry may be discussed with accuracy and yet with elegance;

whereas the Hebrew translations of those writings are even today part and parcel of the intellectual equipment of every cultured Jew in the lands in which Jewish life is still genuinely Jewish, the Arabic originals of those works have remained practically unread and unknown and were rescued but recently from the dust of the centuries to serve the interests of a purely academic scholarship.[1]

Maimonides represents the zenith of Arabic-Jewish culture. His death marks the beginning of its rapid decline. Threatening clouds darken the skies of Jewry, and, with the Christian conquest of Spain, they thicken into impenetrable gloom, weirdly illuminated by the flash of *auto-da-fés*. Jewish history becomes one big blood-soaked page. The tender blossoms of poetry and *belles-lettres* wither in the choking darkness of the dismal Ghettos. Only the torch of religion radiates light and warmth and enables the martyred nation to proceed on its dark and icy path.

To be sure, even now it was only necessary for a few rays to penetrate the heavy clouds in order to bring again to life—as was the case in Italy—the drooping flowers of poetry and literature. But in the newly established center of Judaism, in Poland, as well as in other countries there is an unmistakable tendency to neglect the civilization of all humani-

[1] The philosophic work of Ibn Gebirol, the "Fountain of Life," which was not fortunate enough to find a translator until centuries later, was entirely lost to Judaism, though it influenced profoundly medieval Christian thought. The Arabic original has not yet been found.

tarian phases of literature, and to concentrate the mental energy of the Jews upon the Talmud, which whets the brain, or upon the Cabbala, which heats the imagination. This tendency remained the keynote of Jewish life until the second half of the eighteenth century when Moses Mendelssohn appeared on the scene.

With Moses Mendelssohn—whether through Moses Mendelssohn is a question which need not be discussed on this occasion—begins a completely new phase in the history of Judaism,—not so much because of the external changes which have affected so radically the position of Jewry in the midst of the nations, as on account of the inner transformations which have since taken place in the intellectual life of the Jews. Mendelssohn, who was an accomplished Hebrew scholar and wrote it in masterly fashion, translated the Bible into German with two objects in view: to arouse in his coreligionists their innate love for a pure Hebrew diction and to enable them to partake of the fruits of the new German culture.

During his lifetime and partly with his assistance a coterie of Hebrew litterateurs founded the first Hebrew monthly under the name *Ha-meassef* ("The Gatherer"), which engaged in a vigorous campaign for the diffusion of European enlightenment among the Jews of the Ghetto. Ere long victory perched on their banners—but it was a Pyrrhic victory. With the alertness so characteristic of our race the Jews, using the Hebrew language as a ladder, scaled the wall of German civilization and thereupon threw away the ladder which had become superfluous.

After years of bitter struggle the Jews were finally granted the rights of citizenship. But the prisoner who has languished for years in a gloomy dungeon cannot accustom himself so easily to the light of day. The use which the Jews made of their newly-won liberty turned its blessing into a curse. They did not accept their liberty as a matter of course, as a natural right due to every one created in the image of God. They rather looked upon it as a special act of grace for which they thought they had to be perpetually grateful. The form which this gratitude took is known to all of us. With an irreverance which runs counter to the innermost nature of the Jew our people began to throw off everything that was reminiscent of Judaism. Jewish life and thought began to be remodeled, not in accordance with the inner laws of Jewish development, but in obedience to hints from without. The majestic and venerable figure of Jewish tradition was reduced to a hollow and lifeless doll, and war was declared against the most precious possessions of the Jewish people.

It goes without saying that the Hebrew language was among the first victims of this anti-Jewish fanaticism of the Jews. It sought safety in the synagogue, the last haven of refuge of everything Jewish. But the inexorable pursuers tracked her into the sanctuary and insisted on driving her thence. It is true that during this period of desertion and disloyalty there had arisen the Science of Judaism. But the Science of Judaism became the possession of a small caste of scholars—a differentiation which had never been known to exist in Jewish history—whilst

the bulk of the people sank to ever lower depths of ignorance, such as finds few, if any, parallels in the annals of Judaism. Judaism seemed to be doomed. Its death-knell had sounded, and soon it would breathe forth its last never to rise again. But suddenly lo and behold, a miracle took place. The eternal wanderer who, yearning for death, had hurled himself into the abyss of destruction, shook off his stupor and, with an energy and vitality which seem inexhaustible, jumped out of the depth of the pit to new life. Instead of the icy death-dealing storms of winter we now witness the gentle life-giving breezes of springtime. Few of us will doubt that this miraculous transformation owes its origin to the Jewish East, to the influences which have emanated from the great center of Judaism in Russia.

For the stimulus which had gone forth from Mendelssohn and had penetrated into the Ghettos of Eastern Europe led there to entirely different results than it had done in the West of Europe. There, too, Mendelssohn's influence tended to reawaken the love for the Hebrew language and the striving for general European culture, and already at the end of the eighteenth century we notice a few swallows, the harbingers of the approaching spring. Yet it took many years before the spring actually came. It was only in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century that Isaac Baer Levinsohn, the Mendelssohn of Russian Jewry, started upon his career, championing in his numerous epoch-making works the cause of Hebrew and of general education. As if by magic, there sprang out of the ground a little army of talented

writers who cast the thoughts of modern Europe into the mould of ancient Hebrew. The Hebrew language renewed its youth and served again as the vehicle of thought for every branch of human knowledge. Mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and, above all, poetry and fiction once more find their representation in Hebrew literature. Out of the vast array of literary talent the following three names may be singled out which laid their stamp upon that period of Hebrew literature, the period of Enlightenment, or Haskala: the novelist Abraham Mapu, the publicist Perez Smolenskin, and the poet Judah Leib Gordon.

Unfortunately, the Jewry of Eastern Europe, like that of the West, did not pass altogether unscathed through this cultural transformation. At one time it seemed that Russian Jewry would fall a prey to the same fatal error which had undermined Jewish life in the West. When, during the reign of Alexander II, the sun of freedom began to smile upon the Jews, a part of Russian Jewry manifested the same ugly tendency towards assimilation and self-annihilation which had been observed among the Jews of Western Europe. There was a repulsive and almost panicky desertion of everything Jewish. The rock of Judaism showed ominous signs of attrition, foreshadowing its utter annihilation in a more or less distant future. The poet Judah Leib Gordon, who wrote the Hebrew language with the force and purity of an Isaiah, gave voice to these forebodings in verses full of doubt and despair:

Who's there who would reveal the future times,
And give me assurance that I am not the last
Who Zion's thoughts into Hebrew forms can cast,
And you're not the last to read my Hebrew rhymes?

Poets, they say, are prophets. This time, however, the fears of our poet did not come true. To prove their groundlessness the Jews of Russia had to pay a heavy price. The assimilated sections of Russian Jewry had to be taught in an emphatic, not to say, striking manner the duty they owed to their people, and, not having drifted too far from their Jewish moorings, they took the lesson to heart and speedily returned into the fold. The Zionist idea which in its modern form now marches victoriously through the lands of Eastern Europe assumed concrete shape, and with the rise of the Zionist movement there began a great activity in Hebrew literature which opens up before us new and undreamt of vistas. Innumerable publications dealing with every phase of life and thought are brought out in uninterrupted succession. Numerous magazines and newspapers are coming into existence which, using the rejuvenated idiom of the Bible as their medium of expression, discuss the events of the day and the problems of our times. Writers of great force and poets stamped with the mark of genius constantly enter the arena of Hebrew literature. There is no thought or sentiment stirring modern humanity which is not echoed in the Hebrew language. Even the *fin-de-siecle* philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche has clothed itself in the garb of the biblical idiom. We may hold different opinions as to the advisability of introducing tendencies of

this kind into Judaism, but none of us can help acknowledging with admiration the wonderful vitality of a language which was born on the fields of Western Asia and yet can reproduce the ultra-modern catchwords of Nietzscheanism with scarcely less force and pithiness than characterize them in the mother-tongue of the poet-philosopher. However, we are only at the threshold of the new movement. Its further progress can hardly be foreseen, and still less foretold.

These extraordinary changes are gradually beginning to affect also the Jewish centers in the West of Europe. Here, too, the Jews are slowly realizing that it is nobler to devote their energies to the cultivation and perfection of their individuality than to consume them in a futile attempt at self-effacement. Here, too, the conviction is gaining ground that Judaism can never attain to a healthy and vigorous development until the weakened blood circulation between the scattered limbs of Jewry in the West and its heart in the East is restored to its normal function. Here, too, we are on the eve of a future which is full of promise. The Hebrew courses which are being organized in various cities in Germany are the modest primroses of this future. Let us hope that the tender shoot which tonight we confidently plant in the soil of the future may grow into a mighty and fruitful tree and may in a small way assist in the rejuvenation and unification of the Jewish people.

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VIII

A NEW SPECIMEN OF MODERN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS*

I APPROACH the task of reviewing Professor Briggs' commentary on the Psalms with considerable reluctance. His book appears under auspices which are apt to silence the voice of criticism, and seem to compel respect and admiration. It forms part of the International Critical Commentary, a comprehensive exegetical enterprise which endeavors, in its own words, to be "abreast of modern biblical scholarship and, in a measure, lead its van." It is the work of a voluminous theological writer. It represents, as the author impressively informs us, the product of forty years of labor. It extends over two bulky volumes, covering some eleven hundred pages, mostly in small compact type. It bristles with learned abbreviations and formulas and dazzles the eye with philological references and quotations. It possesses, in short, all the external characteristics of a standard work, and it has already been hailed as

*The article was first published in the *American Hebrew* on July 5, 1907. It contains a review of the following work: "The International Critical Commentary, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms by Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D., D. Litt., Professor of Theological Encyclopaedia and Symbolics, Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Emilie Grace Briggs, B.D., New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. Vol. I (pp. cx, 422), 1906; Vol. II (pp. 572), 1907."

such by enthusiastic and obliging critics. Yet when one has unflinchingly worked his way through the formidable portals and has finally penetrated into the interior of the commentary, one is surprised, nay, shocked to discover that the pompous and magnificent entrance leads—to a shanty. It is difficult to give adequate expression to our disappointment over the astounding discrepancy between our expectations and their realization, and I openly confess that, being averse to fault finding and polemics, I would decidedly prefer to keep my sentiments to myself. But knowing, as I do, that the public, particularly the Jewish public, judging by externalities and titles, is likely to accept this commentary as the last word of biblical science, and remembering the alertness with which one of our "scientific" rabbis not so long ago embodied similar "results" in a book of devotion, I consider myself in duty bound to take this painful task upon me and to endeavor to show that the critical up-to-date commentary of Professor Briggs is neither critical nor up-to-date, but represents in scope and method a new specimen of that arbitrary and unscientific tendency in modern biblical exegesis which only contributes to discredit this branch of learning in the eyes of all sober-minded scholars and, if not checked in time, will unavoidably lead to its ruin.

To begin with the beginning. The series of which Professor Briggs' Psalm commentary forms a part is called the International *Critical* Commentary. Professor Briggs' work itself is styled a *Critical* and Exegetical Commentary, and in the Editors' Preface, which is prefixed to every volume of the series and for which

Professor Briggs as co-editor of the Old Testament books is personally responsible, the distinguishing feature of the whole enterprise is summed up in the leading sentence: "The Commentaries will be international and inter-confessional, and will be free from polemical and ecclesiastical bias." What is more natural then that, building on the assurance of author and editors, we should expect to find a commentary which limits itself to an objective presentation and examination of the available material and strictly eliminates all matters of belief which are of necessity subjective and therefore incapable of scientific demonstration? Yet, one only has to glance at the contents of our commentary to make the painful discovery that Promise and Fulfilment are far from being identical, and that Professor Briggs the Commentator has no regard whatsoever for Professor Briggs the Editor. Who, for instance, would not feel astonished to find in a "critical" commentary the assertion, given in the form of a theorem and a lengthy homiletic corollary, to the effect that the contents of the Psalter "give evidence to its holy character as coming from God and leading to God" (p. xciv),—an assertion which so flagrantly contradicts the unbridled radicalism displayed in the treatment of the text and contents of the Psalms that one is puzzled whether this "holy character" is meant to inhere in the commonly accepted Psalter or in the considerably modified text which Professor Briggs presents in his commentary.

However this may be, our astonishment soon grows into bewilderment when in our further study of the book we constantly stumble against lucubrations and

interpretations of an avowedly Christological nature, which may testify to the author's loyalty to his faith, may also, as edifying reading, serve the purposes of Practical or Homiletical Exegesis deliberately excluded from the plan of the series by its editors, but can have no place in a critical inter-confessional commentary which is supposed to be free from polemical and ecclesiastical bias. To be sure, Professor Briggs is by no means original or solitary in this Christological attitude. He who is familiar with Higher Biblical Criticism knows that even the "highest" critics are not apt to forget that they are Christian theologians, and their lionine courage becomes lamb-like submissiveness when the New Testament takes the place of the Old. But one has to search far and wide to find a critic who with such irritating persistency and such undisguised callousness thrusts his Christian beliefs and sentiments in the face of the reader. The author is in all earnestness convinced that Psalm ii (as well as Psalm cx) "find their only realization in the resurrection, enthronement and reign of Jesus Christ" (p. xcvii, compare also i, p. 13). Psalm xxii "indeed gives a more vivid description of the sufferings of Christ on the cross than the authors of the Gospels," and this statement is corroborated by an argumentation which is so highly characteristic of the author's cast of mind and is in its scholastic logic so vastly superior to the "Rabbinical subtleties" repudiated by our author (p. cvii) that I cannot resist quoting it in full. Our author discusses the question whether the coincidence of the Psalmist's description with the sufferings of Christ is accidental or due to "prophetic anticipation":

> We cannot, quoth Professor Briggs (i, p. 192), think of direct prophecy. The reference to a historical situation is unmistakable. But inasmuch as the poet, like the author of the conception of the suffering servant of Isaiah II, idealizes the sufferings of Israel, and gives his sufferer a mediatorial relation to the nations, and does this in order to hold up to the pious a comforting conception of a divine purpose in their sufferings, we may suppose that this ideal was designed to prepare the minds of the people of God for the ultimate realization of that purpose of redemption in a sufferer who first summed up in his historical experiences this ideal of suffering.

That the Old Testament is considered inferior and a mere foil to the New is only to be expected under the circumstances. Professor Briggs is convinced that the Psalms as well as the Gospels are "Books of God." Yet "the Gospels are greater because they set forth the Life and Character of our Lord and Saviour" (Preface, p. ix),—an assertion which Jesus himself, who died with a Psalm word on his lips, would have indignantly repudiated. The imprecations in the Psalter give our author a great deal of concern as being " the only objections to the canonicity of the Psalter, seriously entertained" (p. xcvii), the more so when he calls to his mind the unquestionably more numerous imprecations in the New Testament. But our resourceful theologian is by no means in despair. After a lengthy preciously casuistic analysis which one is amazed to find in a Twentieth Century "critical" commentary the author reaches the comforting conclusion that " there is a place for imprecations in the highest forms of Christianity, only it is more discriminating than in the Old Testament religion and much more refined" (p. c.).

This "polemical and ecclesiastical bias" has so tight a grip on our author that under its influence he does not even shrink from a manoeuvre which is truly unprecedented. Professor Briggs knows of a surety that "the renunciation of the deceit of spirit is a very high ethical ideal, not appearing elsewhere in the Old Testament" (i. p. 278). Consequently the words "and in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Psalm xxxii, v. 2) must be done away with, and the clause is declared to be a later gloss. One would naturally expect that this "high ethical ideal" was lovingly smuggled into the Old Testament by a Christian hand, but with curious inconsistency our author is kind enough to admit that the gloss is "from the school of Hebrew Wisdom," which even Professor Briggs allows to be considered a part of the Old Testament. It would be ridiculous even to attempt to show how unfair, uncritical and unscientific such a method of interpretation must necessarily appear, how grossly it violates the fundamental logical prohibition of *petitio principii*, of begging the question. But I would like to ask Professor Briggs what he would say were we to apply precisely the same method to the New Testament and juggle away its "high ethical ideals" by declaring the sentences in question to be later interpolations? Surely, we can expect of so loyal a Christian a fairer application of the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them."

In this connection, as a particular aspect of ecclesiastical bias, I may mention the manner in which Professor Briggs deals with Jewish authorities. No one

who is aware with what sovereign contempt modern biblical exegesis ignores the old Jewish commentators who were the real founders of this department of biblical learning, and how time and again interpretations are propounded with an applomb of novelty which one reads as a matter of course in commentaries like those of Rashi, Ibn Ezra or Kimhi, will ever expect a different attitude on the part of Professor Briggs. But what is so irritating about his commentary is the fact that it appears under false pretences and unnecessarily arouses expectations which it so utterly fails to realize. When we glance at the list of authors and writings at the head of the commentary we are agreeably struck by a number of Jewish names and titles. But when we search for them in the commentary itself, we are just as painfully struck by their absence and we soon discover that they really are—names and titles.

We miss, for instance, the mention of Ibn Ezra in passages like Ps. xxii, 1 and 16, or xxx 8, or that of Rashi on Psalm lxviii, 28, whose explanation would have shown the author that the ancient versions did not translate, but, as they so frequently do, interpret. However, it is sufficient to mention the curious reference to "R. Jehuda in Aben (as the author is wont to say instead of Ibn) Ezra" (ii, p. 230) who, as a matter of fact, is quoted in a different verse and on an altogether different word, or to point to the truly astounding statement (p. cv) that the Psalm commentary of Saadia, "the earliest important interpreter of the Psalms," which has till very recently been the object of numerous fragmentary editions, was published in Cracow as early as in 1660 (an inexcusable confusion with the commentary of Rashi), in order to establish beyond doubt that our author never read, and perhaps never saw, an old Jewish commentary.

The modern Jewish commentators who write in European languages fare somewhat better, although the lack of discrimination with which our author, in pursuance of the chronological order, places the unflinchingly orthodox S. R. Hirsch by the side of his life-long opponent, the excessively radical Graetz, or the aesthetically attractive Montefiore by the side of the independent and creative Ehrlich makes the extent of his familiarity even with these commentators a matter of doubtful conjecture. Under these circumstances I scarcely have the courage to criticize our author for his inacquaintance with the Hebrew Psalm commentary of Chayes (Zhitomir, 1902, in the series of critical commentaries in Hebrew, published by A. Kahana), which, in spite of its daring conjectures, is highly instructive and suggestive. But I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise that our commentator makes so little use of the unsurpassed Hebrew knowledge and wonderful stylistic instinct of Ehrlich. It is true, in some instances Professor Briggs quotes his Psalm commentary, but in innumerable instances he does not, although a glance at it would frequently have saved him from propounding inferior and even preposterous interpretations.[1]

[1] Compare, e. g., Ehrlich's explanations of Ps. vi, 5, 8; xii, 6; xvi, 3, 7; xxix; xlv, 5; lxviii, 10, 21, 29; cxxxvii. His emendations, too, which are always suggestive, often admirable and above all—Hebrew, might have been studied with profit. See his commentary on Ps. viii, 3; xxii, 4 (where our author does not even notice the difficulty), 9; xxx, 10; xxxii, 4, 8, 9; lviii, 2; lxviii, 11; lxxxiv, 11, 19; cx, 6; cxlv, 13, and innumerable other passages.

After all these specimens one can easily imagine the display of our author's scholarship when it touches on matters Jewish not strictly connected with biblical exegesis, and lying more in the direction of the post-biblical literature of the Rabbis, or, as our author is wont to call them, "Rabbins." In his list of authors and writers Professor Briggs does not fail to quote the Talmud. But references like "the Baba Bathra of the Talmud" (p. xix), or "Pea I, 16 b" (i, p. 393), which the reviewer with some difficulty found out to mean Talmud Yerushalmi, ed. Krotoshin, vol. I, fol. 16 b, Tractate Pea, make it probable that the author is not even cognizant of the existence of a Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud, and they are at once characteristic of the sources from which our author choses to derive his knowledge. Had Professor Briggs had access to the original rabbinical sources or, at least, to reliable secondary information, he could not have counted the Book of Chronicles, whose early canonicity is attested by the Mishna (Yoma, 1, 6), among the biblical books that were disputed (p. xix), while he could not possibly have failed to mention the Book of Esther, and, above all, the Book of Ezekiel.[1] But then he would also have undoubtedly seen—although in this respect he is sustained by some other Christian scholars—that these "disputes" had nothing to do with the canonicity of the books in question and prove in no way that " the Writings were of indefinite extent until their limits were defined by the Synod of

[1] See Buhl, Canon and Text of the Old Testament, Edinburgh 1892, pp. 30, 31, especially p. 31, at the bottom.

Jamnia" (end of first century C. E.)— an assertion which flatly contradicts the express statement of Josephus (*contra Apionem* 1, 8). Then probably he would also have avoided speaking with such unshakable confidence of the "official Hebrew text of the school of Jamnia" (p. xxix, xxxiii; xxv), which at most is a matter of disputable conjecture. Amusing and interesting even for the general Jewish reader is another statement by our author that the five Scrolls were assigned for reading at "the five great feasts of Judaism" (p. lxxxviii).

Under the conditions prevailing in Christian theological literature, I should not wonder were Professor Briggs to be proclaimed one day an authority on rabbinical matters by those to whom even the titles and names are not accessible. But I frankly confess that the ignorance displayed by our author in things relating to Judaism is more painful to the reviewer than it probably is to the author. For when I look back on the history of biblical exegesis and call to my mind under what difficulties the Holy Jerome sought and obtained the instruction of a Jewish teacher, with what eagerness and gratitude in the dark Middle Ages Christian scholars learned from Jews and Jewish books, I feel ashamed for the little spiritual influence we are able to exercise to-day. For it is a terrible indictment of modern Jewry and its lack of moral prestige that in a city which contains the largest Jewish settlement in the world, which counts thousands of Jews who can justly claim the title of scholars, a writer of note can undertake to exhibit such questionable scholarship on matters relating to Judaism

and not consider it necessary to seek Jewish advice when so easily obtainable.

However, our criticism of Professor Briggs' work has so far touched upon points which lie on the circumference of an exegetical work, and I would not have given them such prominence, were it not for the expectations to the contrary, which the author himself helps to arouse in the mind of the reader. The centre of a biblical commentary naturally lies in the interpretation of the text and contents of the biblical books, and the way this task is carried out must finally and conclusively determine our judgment. It is therefore this fundamental point which must now claim our attention.

The interpretation of a biblical book, like that of any other ancient text, has a twofold object: it consists, as our forefathers called it, of *perush ha-milloth*, the interpretation of the *text*, and of *perush ha-'inyan*, the interpretation of the *contents*, or, as modern biblical scholars similarly but more pretentiously style it, of Lower Criticism, dealing with the text in the original as well as in the versions, and of Higher Criticism, comprising the questions of authorship, sources, historical background, and so forth. Higher Criticism is deemed, as its name indicates, of higher value in our efforts to fathom the last meaning and purport of the biblical books. But no sane-minded scholar will deny that its basis must always be Lower Criticism, and only when this basis is sound can the deductions of Higher Criticism claim any degree of scientific solidity. The editors of the International Critical Commentary evidently were of the same opinion, for

in their preface they pledge themselves that each volume of the series "will be based upon a thorough critical study of the original *texts* of the Bible."

Lower Criticism, again, which is primarily concerned with the Hebrew text obviously demands as a *conditio sine qua non* an intimate familiarity with the Hebrew language, its grammar, vocabulary and phraseology, supplemented, in modern times, by a thorough acquaintance with the results of Hebrew philology which has made such wonderful strides in the last century and, at least, a fair knowledge of the cognate Semitic languages which are so eminently helpful in the elucidation of the frequently obscure Hebrew vocabulary. It is in the light of these absolutely indispensable requirements of modern biblical exegesis that we have to judge Professor Briggs' commentary. But the result of our examination is of so negative a nature that we feel reluctant to give it adequate expression. Professor Briggs, formerly Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages, disregards the latter almost completely. I scarcely find any reference to Arabic or Assyrian, two languages which are so fundamentally important for the study of Hebrew, and only an occasional reference to Syriac. Hebrew philology is badly neglected.

> In the list of authors and writings which contains Lagarde's work on Hebrew Nouns we miss a reference to the famous book of Professor Barth on the same subject. Were our author acquainted with the results of Hebrew philology, he could not possibly maintain that the word *negina*, which by its very form is necessarily an abstract, can ever designate an *instrument* (p. lxxvii), or that the form *mosher* (ii, p. 106), could under any circumstances be

derived from a verb which is *primae yod* in all Semitic languages. He would also have known that *ya'tem* (Ps. lv, 5) is not a *Hiphil*, but a *Kal* with an "i" impertect, a fact which he might have learnt from Barth's article in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft* (year 1889), or even from the more easily accessible grammar of Gesenius (§ 63n).

But why demand the knowledge of scientific philology, when the simplest facts of Hebrew grammar and vocabulary are trodden under foot? *Alehu* (Ps. i, 3) is, according to the author, an "archaic poetic suffix" (i, p. 9), as if in words ending in a *he* another suffix were possible. The author emendates *kanfay* (Ps. cxxxix, 9), which is an insult to the Hebrew declension of nouns, while he might have learnt the correct form (*kenafay*) from Ehrlich's commentary. He connects, in a proposed emendation, a feminine noun with the masculine form of the verb (See i, p. 283 to Ps. xxxii, 4, or ii p. 84 to Ps. lxv, 2). He does not know that an intransitive verb cannot form a passive participle (ii, p. 112). He is not aware of the impossibility of deriving a form *maheleth* from the verb *hallal* and assigning to it the meaning "wounding, trouble" (p. lxxvi). He does not see the absurdity of proposing the reading *polet* ("fugitive"), a participle of the *Kal* which occurs only once in the whole Bible, while all the references quoted by the author himself point to the *Piel*, or of taking as an equivalent for "span the bow!" the Hebrew *wehadrech* (i, p. 391), while the verb is most commonly used in the *Kal*. He emendates the senseless *netzartani* for textual *tzartani* (Ps. cxxxix, 5), which gives an excellent meaning ("to form"), and which he might have found in Gesenius' dictionary. He suggests the reading *yashbithu* (if I correctly point the unpointed word), while, even if this reading were correct, it could only be *hishbithu* (ii, p. 159).—I have quoted at random and could easily continue *ad libitum*.

One would expect that a man with such shaky knowledge of Hebrew would not have the courage to

make alterations in the text, a task which naturally demands a considerably closer intimacy with the language than mere interpretation. But the very reverse is the fact. The author's attitude toward the established text is foreshadowed in the introduction in which an enthusiastic tribute is paid to Professor Cheyne, of Oxford, "for his brave investigation of the most difficult problems" (p. cix), a man whose critical methods and especially whose textual emendations have long become a by-word among all sober-minded critics.[1] Needless to say our author is every bit as "brave" as his master. Free from the shackles of grammatical rule and stylistic usage, our commentator gives full vent to his daring spirit. He emendates to the right and the left, and not a single Psalm escapes his fury of destruction. How far his emendations comply with the most elementary rules of the Hebrew language has already been illustrated by some of the examples quoted above. The author himself is apparently aware that he treads on slippery ground. For in many a passage where he diffusely and elaborately comments on his emendation he makes desperate efforts to avoid the exact wording of the proposed reading.[2] Is it necessary to state that Professor Briggs' emendations which encircle the whole Psalter, proposed, as they are, with a complete disregard of

[1] I attempted to characterize Cheyne's methods of textual criticism in my review of his Isaiah edition in Haupt's Polychrome Bible (*Zeitschrift fuer Hebraeische Bibliographie*, 1900, pp. 105-108.).

[2] Compare i, p. 283 on Ps. xxxii, 4; ii, p. 110 and 111 on Ps. lxviii, 23, 24, 30, and other examples.

the simplest requirements of philology, and without the faintest attempt at discrimination, are one gigantic failure? That far from "mending" the biblical text they only render it more difficult and obscure? We positively stand aghast when we read such reckless, meaningless and outrageously un-Hebrew emendations as proposed on I, p. 393, or II p. 109 (on Ps. lxviii, 18,) or p. 230, given in the name of modern bibilical criticism, and we utterly fail to comprehend how the author's co-editor of the Old Testament books, Professor Driver, of Oxford, whose knowledge, precision and sound judgment are highly esteemed by every biblical student, could have lent the prestige of his name to such unheard-of eccentricities. We are far from objecting to textual criticism. No unbiased student of Scripture can deny the enormous gain which the biblical text can derive from emendations, and he will heartily welcome a work like the new critical edition of the Hebrew Bible by Kittel. But when one sees the terrible abuse of textual emendations on the part of "critics" like Briggs, how the liberty toward the biblical text degenerates into license, unrestrained by considerations of philology, criticism or even common sense, one feels inclined to welcome a new Massora which would put a ban upon such hazardous attempts and would safeguard the text against critics who consider the Bible a "Book of God" and yet deal with it in a fashion as they never would dare with a book of man.

Having examined Professor Briggs' standards of Lower Criticism we feel little inclined and scarcely consider it necessary to scrutinize more deeply the Higher

Criticism of our commentator. We can easily imagine the solidity of its deductions when built on so shaky a foundation. For what value can we assign to conclusions based upon defective philogical data or extremely questionable textual emendations? The author, for instance, frequently determines the date of a Psalm by means of its style. It is, however, a fact known to every student of Hebrew philology that the differentiation of the Hebrew language according to periods is a most complicated and difficult task which will remain a desideratum for a long time to come. What consideration then can Professor Briggs' hasty conclusions claim in this direction?

> We scarcely believe our eyes when we read vol. i, p. 4 (in his comment on Psalm i) the dry categorical statement: "The language of the Psalm is that of the Greek period: *'atzath resha'im* v. 1 b, *moshab letzim* v. 1 d, *palge mayim* v. 3 a. The syntax is also late: *wehaya* v. 3 a, *yode'a* v. 6." For had Professor Briggs consulted Gesenius' dictionary, which he recently helped to publish in an English edition, he would undoubtedly have seen that the first expression occurs also in Job x, 3, xxi, 16; *palge mayim* in Proverbs v, 16, xxi, 1, Lamentations iii, 48. As to the syntax, I am most curious to know how the verbs in question could by any chance have been used differently in biblical Hebrew. We are amazed—or perhaps amused—at the omniscience of our author, when we read (ii, p. 152) his evidence for the late style of Psalm lxxiv, verses 3, 6, 14, which he regards as glosses, knowing, as we do, and as the author should have known, that *liwyathan* is to be found in Isaiah xxvii, 1 as well as in Job iii, 8 and xl, 25, that the phrase *harim pa'am mashu'oth* is an invention of Professor Briggs, and that the words *kashil* and *kelappoth*, whose ancient pedigree is evident to everyone acquainted with the formation of Hebrew nouns, are found only in this passage in the entire Bible.

We heartily concur with the author in his plea that "very great importance must be attached to the study of words and phrases" (p. lix). But seeing the manner in which our author has pursued this very important study, we can only feel sorry for the "immense labor" our author has bestowed on a "lexicon of the Psalter, giving every word and every use of every word," "based on a revised Hebrew text" (p. vii), and we cannot suppress a feeling of apprehension at the announcement of its speedy publication.

It goes without saying that this absence of a sound philological basis affects not only the particular question of the dates of the Psalms, but manifests itself with equally disastrous results in every department of Professor Briggs' exegesis. My observations do not extend over the whole work but confine themselves to large portions derived from various sections. Yet, I would vastly exceed the limits of an article, were I to recount all the passages which excite our opposition, bewilderment and even indignation. But I cannot avoid indicating in general terms one fundamental defect of this commentary which must already have become patent from the above illustrations and which, apart from an inadequate philological equipment, constitutes the main source of the author's shortcomings,—I mean the fact that Professor Briggs who, as editor and author, lays such emphatic stress on the critical nature of his commentary shows such an appalling lack—of criticism. For criticism, in its original etymological meaning, is "discrimination," is the ability to distinguish the various degrees of truth, to discern the correct from the incorrect, the

certain from the uncertain, the probable from the improbable, and the possible from the impossible—an ability which is absolutely indispensable in a province where the evidence is seldom conclusive, but mostly approximate. Our charge against the author can scarcely be better illustrated and substantiated than by the curious and striking fact that in a critical commentary on the Psalter, which perhaps more than any biblical book has been the object of exegetical endeavors and conjectures, no word is more lavishly used than the adjective and adverb "doubtless." It is scarcely credible what dubities and even absurdities are honored with this most sacred and most exclusive epithet of true science and criticism. The author completely ignores the boundaries between the possible, probable and necessary, and often gives the impression as if his thinking were governed by different logical categories. His statements are, as a rule, most confident and definite, but his evidence is so vague, his argumentation so blurred that the reverse is just as capable of demonstration. Professor Briggs, for instance, feels so confident and "doubtless" as to the dates of the Psalms—a most hotly disputed position of Higher Criticism—that in his introduction he gives an itemized account, accompanied by an elaborate statistical table, of all the Psalms and of the periods over which they are distributed. But when you examine his evidence for so imposing a structure, you cannot but marvel at the self-confidence of the author, and occasionally cannot help smiling when you realize, e. g., that Psalm lviii, which, according to our critic, is "doubt-

less" one of the oldest, is considered by authoritative scholars (Baethgen, Olshausen, and others) of a particularly late origin.

The author is even more confident and assertive "in the detection and elimination of the glosses in the search for the original texts as they came from the authors" (p. vii). There are many critics who, like Kittel, altogether deny the possibility of tracing "the original texts as they came from the authors," but no one will dispute that it is a most difficult and delicate task which demands utmost precaution and discrimination. Professor Briggs, however, who has such great admiration for the "brave investigation of the most difficult problems," courageously ignores all difficulties. He is in all earnestness convinced that he is able to detect the traces of every hand through which the Psalter has gone and even to fix the date of the glosses, consisting, as a rule, of a few words, and sometimes (e. g., ii, p. 154, on Ps. lxxiv, 11) even of a single word. He distinguishes with categorical "doubtlessness" between explanatory glosses, glosses of identification, amplification and expansion, and makes such liberal use of his system that the whole appearance of the Psalter is radically changed. But when you approach this edifice with a little logic, it flies asunder like a house of cards and leaves nothing but the subjective opinion of the author.[1] The

[1] The author, e. g., considers Ps. lxxiv, v. 14, a late gloss (ii, p. 155). But the ancient *Tiyamat* myth reflected in this verse, of which Professor Briggs has apparently never heard (in spite of Gunkel's numerous publications!), obviously speaks for its authenticity. Ps. lxviii, v. 31 (as, in fact, the whole

evidence is so slender that by the very same method it is quite possible to explain away any verse in the Bible and transform the whole Scripture into a conglomeration of heterogeneous glosses.

The author is no less emphatic and categorical in his endeavor to reconstruct the original metrical form of the Psalms. But even admitting the existence of a biblical metre, one cannot help wondering at the certitude of our author in dealing with a problem which is only in its infancy, and in building a large metrical system on the doubtful basis of eliminated glosses or textual emendations. There is not a single Psalm which can be made to fit into the author's metrical scheme without violent alterations and eliminations. But the lack of evidence in no way inconveniences our author. He is even so "brave" as to amplify his metrical hypothesis by the postulation of a sort of rhyme, or "assonance," in the Psalter. His illustrations, however, are most amusing. He emphasizes, for instance, in Psalm vi (i, p. 46, compare also p. 257, 263, ii, p. 72, 373, etc.) the pronouns "me," "my," and "thee," "thy," by italics to indicate that they constitute a rhyme. But when we glance at the contents, we are puzzled to know how the Psalmist who speaks of God and himself could possibly have expressed himself otherwise. He forces a

Psalm) has always been the object of exegetic ingenuity. But our author has actually the courage to set aside all difficulties by decreeing (ii, p. 104): "Glossators, misunderstanding this difficult clause, after the omission of an important word, left it in such a state that it has always been a crux of interpreters and versions." Further illustrations are unnecessary.

rhyme into Psalm cx by ruthlessly mutilating the text (see ii p. 381). He finds a continuous assonance of the plural endings *im* and *oth* in the Psalm fragment, cxliv, 12-15, but his way of demonstrating it is probably without a parallel in the whole department of biblical exegesis:

> *Banenu* is changed into *banim*. *Kineti'im* is emendated, after the example of Ehrlich, into *Kineti'e*, yet in the preceding line the reading of the Massora is used as a proof for the "assonance." *Bin'urehem* is "doubtless" *bin'urim*. *Benothenu* is changed into *banoth*. *Tabnith hechal* becomes *tabniyoth*: "although the plural does not occur elsewhere, there is no reason why it should not have been used here in assonance. Then (!) 'hechal' is an explanatory addition." *Mezawenu* is changed into *mezawim* (a form which never occurs in Hebrew and which the author wisely enough leaves unvocalized). *Mizan el zan* is read *zenim*: "so probably here, as measure and assonance in *im* require,"—the author, however, leaves us in doubt as to whether his emendation refers to the three words or only to the last one. *Tzonenu*: "Assonance requires *tzonoth*, which is unknown elsewhere; but as referring here to the females, the ewes, there is no sufficient reason against it" (!) *Allufenu* is changed into *allufim*. *Peretz*: "Assonance requires plural *peratzim*." *Yotzeth*: "Assonance requires plural *oth*." *Tzewacha*: "Assonance requires plural." *Birhowothenu*: "read *birhowoth*."—Verily, it seems unpardonable to waste the reader's time with such monstrous caricatures of biblical exegesis.

It must have occurred to many a reader that we have accorded too much thought and space to a work which so flagrantly violates the elementary requirements of scholarship. But the unsophisticated reader who argues in this manner is unable to realize how easily the theological guild sets up and almost canonizes its authorities, and he is consequently inclined to under-

value the import and influence of this kind of books. We have earnestly endeavored to point out—sharply but justly—the principal defects of Professor Briggs' Commentary, and we can faithfully assure the reader that, were we engaged in fault-finding, we might easily have swelled our bill of indictment with an additional number of charges, such as the complete neglect of the aesthetic side of the Psalms, the arbitrariness with which the faintest similarities between biblical passages are made to bear upon date and authorship, the diffuseness of style, the unnecessary and therefore confusing multitude of quotations, and many others. Yet, all these glaring imperfections have not been able to daunt the enthusiasm of Prof. Briggs' theological admirers, and they have already—as can be seen from the criticisms appended by the publishers at the end of the second volume—proclaimed his commentary to be "a marvel of minute scholarship," to possess "extreme thoroughness, scholarly precision and depth of insight," or "a wealth of information which is positively astounding," and similar eulogistic utterances. It is more than certain that the theological rank and file will cheerfully submit to the verdict of its leaders, and a new authority is thus created which will lie like a stumbling block in the path of every future Psalm commentator.

But Professor Briggs' work presents still another, far more important aspect which justifies and even necessitates our gravest apprehensions. Professor Briggs' commentary is not the stray effort of an individual writer, but the upshot of a system for which biblical exegesis in its recent development is to be

held directly responsible. This system which breeds books like this is based, in our opinion, on a complete misapprehension of the task and nature of biblical exegesis. It commits the fundamental error in that it considers biblical exegesis, we may even go further and say, biblical science, a —science, a *Wissenschaft*, identical in scope and method with any other branch of learning. It overlooks the fact that every department of learning is built on a series of well-established data, or, in the case of philological learning, on reliable sources which, mostly through new finds, are constantly on the increase. Every other branch of learning consequently offers a large field of activity to scholars whose main force is industry, and we find, if we may examplify our assertion by the cognate province of modern Arabic scholarship, that men like Fluegel or Wuestenfeld who did not possess a spark of genius have earned the sincere gratitude and admiration of all Arabists. In biblical science, however, the "sources" are exceedingly limited, and the influx of new material, as far as it has an immediate bearing on the biblical text, is extraordinarily scarce and irregular. Moreover, the available material itself—the biblical books—is often obscure or ambiguous, and now that Lower Criticism has shaken the foundations of the text of the Bible, and Higher Criticism has transformed its contents into a mass of conjectures, the whole province hangs in the air, with no point of Archimedes to start from. In a sphere like this, where nothing is forbidden and everything permitted, where the material is scant and nothing is unshakably certain, there is only room for scholars

with intuition, for those who, leaping over the gap of evidence, victoriously penetrate to the truth. The representatives of biblical research, however, who, as is but natural, are not all blessed with this rarest of gifts, ignore this special condition of their "science" and make others and themselves believe that, as in every other branch of learning, so here, too, mere industry can take the place of ability and produce lasting results. Thus it comes about that biblical science is cultivated and promoted by exceedingly few men of genius, while the work of the *dii minorum gentium*, despite enormous endeavors and a gigantic scientific apparatus, shares the fate of Penelope's web, and only results in estranging those who think that science is more than whimsical irresponsible guess-work.

Professor Briggs suffers from exactly the same misapprehension. His commentary begins with the statement that it is "the fruit of forty years of labor." He strongly emphasizes this feature of his work. He is so firmly convinced of the value of labor that he categorically declares: "If I could spend more years in preparation, doubtless I would do much better work" (Preface). Our heart contracts when we have to pronounce so harsh a verdict on a book which is the result of a man's life-work, and the fruit of such truly admirable—I say it without a tinge of irony—love of research and self-sacrifice. But the fact remains that Love's labor is lost. For what biblical research indispensably demands is not labor but intuition, that rare faculty which is given but to few. Industry without limit and years without number cannot re-

place that magic gift which finds without seeking. Let every commentator or investigator of the Bible, who sets out to discover unknown truths, remember the warning of Elihu (Job xxxii, 7-8): "I said, days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

IX

THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN ISLAM*

KNOW ye that every nation which has entered upon a period of decline is wont to comfort itself with the hope of returning to its pristine glory and to delude itself with the prospect of regaining its former state of prosperity. Thus we find that the children of Israel were cheated by the promises which were held out to them by their forebears. In a similar manner the Persians are made to look out in vain for their deliverer Bahram Hamavand; the Shiites[1] wait for their Mahdi,[2] and the Christians expect their Savior who is to come fo them from the clouds, and the same is true of all other nations. As the poet puts it:

> Unhappy people are fooled by expectations,
> To non-fulfillment doomed,
> Born of anger at Destiny's hard rulings,
> Wherein their rage is helplessly consumed.

These pithy sentences of the no less profound than brilliant Muhammendan theologian Ali Ibn

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*The following essay represents the inaugural address delivered by the writer on November 15, 1902, at the University of Strassburg (Alsace) on his appointment as lecturer. It was first published in German in *Festschrift zum* 70. *Geburtstage A. Berliner's*, Berlin, 1903.

[1] The Muhammedans are divided into two principal sects: the Sunnites, who represent the orthodox majority, and the Shiites, who constitute the heterodox minority; the latter and are to be found principally in Persia.

[2] The title of their Messiah. See later p. 154.

Hazm[1] point to the psychological fountainhead whence the Messianic idea derives its origin. It is the "anger at Destiny's hard rulings" out of which the Messianic expectation springs even as the fruit grows out of the seed. The sad present makes it necessary for man to seek comfort and compensation in the idealized picture of a happy future, and the gloomier the background of reality, the brighter are the colors with which the future stands out against it. No wonder therefore that the idea of a Messiah is found, from the days of antiquity until our own times, among many nations which have no historic connection with one another. The Messianic hope may be traced among the Hindus and Persians; it is found to a certain extent among the Greeks, and it plays, as we all know, an overwhelming role in the history of the Jews.

Here, too, in the case of the "People of God," the Messianic idea has orginally an unmistakably earthly aspect, representing the hope for a happier political and social future. In contrast to the cheerless present in which the unworthy descendants of the divinely appointed King David wield a godless and unrighteous rule and fill the land with unhappiness and unrest, Israel looks forward to the time when a worthy scion of the Davidic dynasty, putting on righteous-

[1] He lived in the eleventh century and was a friend of the famous Jewish poet and statesman Samuel Hanagid. See on Ibn Hazm the introduction to my book "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites according to Ibn Hazm" (Reprint from the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vols. 28 and 29), New Haven, 1909.

ness like a girdle, shall arise to usher in the golden era of peace and prosperity. The original Messianic ideal of the Hebrews exhibits the traits of a purely natural aspiration and exhales the invigorating breath of their native soil. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that...the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt...And they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof. They shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them, and I will plant them upon their land."[1]

Ere long, however, the Jewish Messianic idea advanced beyond that primitive stage. Very soon it took a turn which completely revolutionized the destinies of the Jewish people and indirectly also the destinies of the human race. This turn, which gave the Messianic belief of the Jews a direction and significance utterly at variance with the Messianic aspirations of other human groups, emanated, like everything else that is great and original in ancient Israel, from the Jewish prophets.

For the Jewish prophets looked at their age from a radically different point of view than did their contemporaries. The prophets, in whose bones the word of the Lord was shut up like a burning fire, who, towering sky-high over the surface of human conventionalities, tried to penetrate to the very heart of things, could not resort to the same picayune standards as did the common run of humanity. In judging the evils of their environment, they did not measure

[1] Amos ix, 13-15.

them by the petty yardstick of the "good old times," but rather by the lofty demands of the absolute ideal. No wonder then that, viewed in this light, the present seemed to them unspeakably cheerless and vulgar, and that, correspondingly, the future stood out before their mind's eye as immeasurably happy and inspiring. Thus the Messianic idea of the prophets, breaking the narrow frame of a purely political aspiration, assumes the vast dimensions of an all-human dream and, while still interwined with the national expectation of a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, reaches its climax in the overwhelming description of that glorious age in which "they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," and in which universal peace, setting aside the brutal laws of nature, shall extend its blessings to the wild man-destroying beasts. "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[1]

This exalted picture of Messianic times, as con-

[1] Isaiah xi, 6-9.

ceived by the prophets, became more and more the common property of the entire Jewish race. In the course of the centuries, however, it was forced to undergo far-reaching modifications. As the position of the Jewish people grew more and more precarious and hopeless, the Messiah had to be endowed with correspondingly large powers in order to effect its salvation. It is not surprising, therefore, that, whereas the Messianic ideal of the prophets, with all its overwhelming loftiness, still fully retains its essentially human aspect, the post-biblical expectation of the Messiah clearly tends in the direction of the superhuman, the transcendental. The Messiah is no more conceived as an earthly king, born within the limits of Time, but rather as a mysterious redeemer who lives forever; nay, his existence is believed to have preceded the creation of the world. His abode is in Heaven where, hidden from the gaze of mankind, he waits for the time when Israel shall be worthy of his manifestation, and when he shall descend from the clouds in order to destroy the powers of evil and usher in the golden age both for the people of the Lord and the other nations who acknowledge the Lord. In this modified form the Messainic idea became firmly implanted in the national consciousness of post-biblical Judaism, gradually assuming a central position in it. It radiated comfort and courage to the Jewish people, enabling it to proceed on its thorny path, and penetrated with its rays the pitch-dark gloom of the Jewish Diaspora.

It is to be assumed *a priori* that an idea occupying such a dominant position in Judaism could not fail to

influence those religious movements which took their source in Judaism. We are, indeed, able to trace this influence with absolute certainty. The overwhelmingly important role which the Messianic idea of Judaism played in the genesis of Christianity is revealed to us in clear-cut outlines in the New Testament. But in Christianity the Messianic idea was not permitted to attain to any growth, for the reason that it found its consummation there. The Gospels which, in spite of occasional protestations to the contrary, did not address themselves to the lost sheep of Israel, but to those that labor and are heavy laden among the entire human race, had no place for the national yearnings after a Davidic scion, and, planting the Kingdom of Heaven in the hearts of men, it was neither willing nor able to find room for the Kingdom of the Messiah. Hence the Messianic idea in Christianity was bound, after a short-lived development, to reach its climax and thereby its end. The more variegated, however, was the course which the evolution of the Messianic idea took in Islam, the second daughter-religion of Judaism.

Occasional references in the Koran make it absolutely certain that already the founder of Islam was familiar with the Messianic idea of Judaism, even though the form in which it appears there is hazy and blurred. The fact that the term *al-masih*, "the Messiah," is used in the Koran, as the standing designation for Jesus, and a number of other indications warrant the conclusion that the Messianic idea reached Muhammed through the medium of Christianity and was therefore stunted in its growth. The

profounder was the influence of Judaism in this domain in the age following that of Muhammed.

This observation is fully in accord with a phenomenon of more far-reaching import, the increase of Jewish influence after Muhammed in general. The founder of Islam, first an illiterate camel herd and later on an exalted visionary, was not in a mental condition to grasp objectively the Jewish ideas presented to him or to convey them adequately to his followers. Nor did the Jews of Arabia, with whom Muhammed came in contact, possess the necessary familiarity with the history of their people to act as reliable transmitters of Jewish lore. Hence the curious and sometimes ridiculous confusion which surrounds the Jewish traditions as presented in the Koran.

But after the death of the Prophet conditions took a vastly different turn in both directions. On the one hand, the intellectual resources of Islam were immensely enriched by the conversion of many Jews who were well versed in the writings of Judaism. On the other hand, Islam itself succeeded in creating a staff of learned men whose task it was to interpret and amplify the stories and statements which are merely hinted at in the Koran. Thus supply and demand met half way, resulting in an over-production of *Isra'iliyyat*, *i. e.*, Jewish, or Israelitish, stories and legends,—an activity which, not always pursued with a due regard for truth, and occasionally tainted by the suspicion of deliberate fraud, had a disastrous effect upon the literary output of Islam. Accordingly, as early as in the first century of the Hegira the Messianic

conceptions of Judaism may be seen circulating among the Faithful under various disguises. On another occasion I tried to point out the intimate relationship between the tangle of legends which envelops the immortal and mysterious prophet al-Khadhir, the singular hero of Muhammedan folklore, and the popular Messianic notions in Judaism.[1] Ere long the Messianic idea of Judaism, transplanted on the soil of Muhamedanism, came in contact with a belief which had originated in Christianity, leading to a most curious combination—we refer to the conception of the Return, or the Second Coming, of Christ.

Though lightly touched upon in the Koran, this dogma rapidly assumed a crystallized form. According to the tenets of Islam, it was not Jesus who was nailed to the cross, but an entirely different person who had assumed his features,—it is the well-known doctrine of Docetism, which had gained wide currency also among heterodox Christian sects. Jesus himself ascended to Heaven whence in the fulness of Time he would come down on earth and—here we witness its amalgamation with the Messianic idea of Judaism—usher in the golden era of peace and prosperity, or, to put it in the terms of the Arabic phrase, which recurs with the regularity of a refrain in Muhammedan literature, "to fill the earth with justice, even as it is now filled with injustice." We can almost imagine ourselves listening to the words

[1 See the writer's book *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman* (Leipsic, 1913), pp. 250-276.]

of Isaiah when we read in the Muhammedan descriptions of that golden age that "lions will feed peacefully with camels, tigers with oxen, wolves with sheep, and children will play harmlessly with serpents."[1]

Yet, so long as the Messianic idea was propagated in this diluted form of an eschatological expectation, the only interest it could arouse among Muhammedans was that of a vague theoretic speculation which, sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, was without any marked effect upon life. It became effective and significant when, transgressing the limits of hazy and transcendental generalities, it found its embodiment in concrete conditions and aspirations. To bring this about there was need of a well-defined political constellation. But the beginnings of Islam were hardly conducive to the rise of a Messianic hope. Young Islam enjoyed to the full the Messianic kingdom upon earth. The half-starved hordes of Beduins were now revelling in the plundered luxuries of over-refined nations and, having but a little while ago fought as the obedient mercenaries of the Byzantines and Persians, they had now become their conquerors and masters. The Messianic ideal seemed to them tangibly embodied right in the present and had no need of being projected into a distant future.

This was changed, however, when in the year 656 there broke out a bitter and bloody civil war which rent the Muhammedan world in twain, and when Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and later on

[1] See Snouck-Hurgronje, *Der Mahdi* (reprint from the *Revue Coloniale Internationale*, vol. 1), p. 9.

his descendants who, because of their exalted kinship, were firmly entrenched in the regard of the Faithful, were unscrupulously robbed of their heritage by the ungodly Omayyads, whose innermost heathenism was but poorly disguised by the mantle of official Islamic orthodoxy. Only then, when the wicked Omayyad usurpers seemed to fill the earth with injustice, was the soil of Islam prepared for a vigorous development of Messianic hopes and expectations.

Even then, however, these hopes carried but little weight with the ruling classes, with the party in power, which now as before was perfectly content and happy. For Islam continued victorious on the field of battle, and the victories from without were accompanied by economic prosperity from within. Consequently, the Messianic ideas had to limit their appeal to the vanquished classes, to the parties of opposition, which had been made to feel the sting of defeat and oppression.

There were two parties which were engaged in a bitter struggle with the powers at the helm of the State. On the one hand, there were the democratic Kharijites who advocated the view that the office of Caliph was a matter of election and open to every faithful believer, demanding of the ruler of Islam not aristocratic birth but merely strict compliance with the divinely ordained law. There were, on the other hand, the legitimistic Shiites who believed in the hereditary nature of the Caliphate and looked upon Ali and his descendants as the only rightful claimants to the throne of Islam, denouncing the present Muhammedan rulers as wicked usurpers.

Now the Kharijites were but little susceptible to Messianic speculations, because, recruited as they mostly were from the unbridled dwellers of the desert and unhesitatingly resorting to acts of terrorism, they were able to advance their cause with dagger and sword, and could easily dispense with the help of a Messiah. Hence the Messianic expectations were limited in their influence to the party of the Shiites, which was largely made up of the over-refined and effeminate city dwellers and, being the helpless victims of ever new disappointments and persecutions, needed the comforting assurance of the appearance of a Messiah who would fill the earth with justice, even as, at least in their case, it was filled with injustice.

The conception, advocated in the foregoing, of the development of the Messianic idea in Islam may serve at the same time as an answer to another question which has been frequently discussed by modern investigators of Islam,—the question as to the origin of Shiitism. Until recently it has been customary, largely under the influence of Kremer and Dozy, to consider Shiitism an outgrowth of the Persian spirit, for the reason that Shiitism, as was observed long ago, contains many elements which are specifically Persian in character, and that its professors are principally recruited from among the Persians, even as the Persia of today is still the official center of the Shiitic doctrine. Lately, however, scholars have come to recognize the inadequacy of these arguments. For the Persian ideas which are found in Shiitism are undoubtedly characteristic of its subsequent phases

and prove nothing, as far as the question of origin is concerned. And as for the nationality of its adherents, while it is an unquestionable fact that in a later age the Persian population was more attracted towards Shiitic heterodoxy than towards the orthodox form of Islam, the first and the earliest exponents of Shiitism were just as unquestionably Arabs of the purest water. Proceeding from these observations, Wellhausen in his treatise "the Religio-Political Opposition Parties in Ancient Islam" advanced the hypothesis that the origin of Shiitism is to be looked for in Judaism, though he thought of an entirely different phase of Judaism and failed altogether to take into account the complex ideas centering around Jewish Messianism.

The Jewish origin of Shiitism is suggested in the Arabic sources themselves. For they all point to a Jew from Southern Arabia, by the name of Abdallah Ibn Saba as the founder of the first Shiitic sect.[1] Taken by itself, this fact would scarcely be sufficient to impress us. For students of Islam are well aware of the knack of Muhammedan theologians to lay every heresy and wickedness in Islam at the door of a Jew. But the indicated role of Abdallah Ibn Saba is supported by other more reliable data. What then were the teachings of this Jewish-Muhammedan sectarian? In reply to this question, we receive an answer which is no answer. For the Arabic authors

[1] The entire material bearing on this mysterious personality is collected and discussed in my treatise *Abdallah b. Saba, der Begruender der Schi'a und sein juedischer Ursprung*, in vols. 23 and 24 (1909-1910) of the *Zeitschrift fuer Assyriologie*.]

persist in piling around him a whole mound of strange and fanciful doctrines which bear the unmistakable imprint of a later development of Shiitism and cannot possibly have been originated by him. As a matter of fact, the Muhammedan theologians are hard at work to model the record of this founder of Shiitism after the pattern of the sectarian chieftains who lived at a much later age.[1]

What then, we may ask again, were the real tenets of Abdallah Ibn Saba? It is fortunate, indeed, that in the jumble of unreliable notices concerning our hero there is one piece of information which bears the impress of truth on its face and may well serve as our point of departure. The Arabic historians relate, in substantial agreement with one another and in evident good faith, that Ali, who gradually began to chafe under the excessive veneration of his Jewish admirer, expelled Abdallah Ibn Saba to the city of Mada'in, the ancient Ctesiphon. This bit of information falls well in line with the following significant statement of an old Arabic writer which is supported by an unimpeachable chain of authorities:[2]

> When the rumor of Ali's murder reached the ears of Abdallah Ibn Saba in Mada'in he exclaimed: 'Even were you to bring me the brain of Ali packed in seventy bundles I would yet refuse to believe in his death. He has surely not died; he is alive and will continue to live until he will come down and fill the earth with justice even as it is now filled with injustice.'

[1] Compare my *Heterodoxies of the Shiites*, Vol. II, p. 100.

[2] See the quotation in my article *Abdallah b. Saba* (*Zeitschrift fuer Assyrioiogie*, vol 24), p. 321f.

From another source we learn that Abdallah Ibn Saba was of the belief that Ali resided in the clouds, and this curious notice is fully borne out by the fact, recorded elsewhere, that this view was widely current in the 'Irak province, the region of ancient Babylonia, where Ali fought and died, and is, moreover, substantiated by a very ancient poem which ridicules the adherents of Ali "who send their greetings to the clouds."

Putting these scattered threads together, we arrive at the conclusion that the doctrine of Abdallah Ibn Saba represents a faithful copy of the Messianic idea of Judaism. *Ali is the Messiah.* It was not Ali in person who was assassinated but somebody else who suffered in his stead—here we have the modifying influence of the Docetic doctrine. Ali himself ascended to Heaven, where, like the Jewish Messiah, he still keeps in hiding, but in the fulness of time, he will emerge from his concealment and, coming down in the clouds, will usher in the golden age of peace and righteousness.[1]

Thus it came about that the Messianic idea of Judaism, which, wedded to the eschatological dogma of the Second Coming of Christ, had been nothing more than an academic abstraction, was suddenly clothed with flesh and sinew through its contact with the tangible interests of the present, and thereby became

[1]The view set forth in the text has been amplified and in part modified by the author in the above-quoted treatise on Abdallah Ibn Saba (*Zeitschrift fuer Assyriologie*, vol 24, p. 3 ff), according to which Abdallah's Messianic conceptions were largely influenced by the semi-heterodox ideas contained in apocryphal literature.]

a driving force and a most baneful factor in the entire subsequent development of Islam.

For here an example had been set which many found it easy to follow. Every descendant of Ali who had heart enough to place himself at the head of an organized movement against the usurpers on the throne of the Caliphs had no difficulty in gaining adherents as soon as he proclaimed himself the Messiah who was predestined to fill the earth with justice. And even when, as actually happened in most cases, the Messianic pretender suffered an ignominious death at the hands of the ruling powers, his followers could easily escape the pangs of disillusionment by comforting themselves with the belief that somebody else had perished in his place, whereas the Messiah himself had withdrawn into a place of safety whence at the right moment he would emerge as the savior of his people.

The deeply penetrating influence of this circle of ideas may be seen in full operation shortly after the death of Ali.

A few years after the assassination of Ali his son Husein arose to claim the throne of the Caliphate, by virtue of his being the grandson of the Prophet. When he was killed by the henchmen of the Omayyad Government, some of the Shiites transferred their allegiance to his half-brother Muhammed Ibn al-Hanafiyya.[1] He was proclaimed by his adherents as the Messiah, or, to use the Arabic term which is

[1]Husein was born to Ali by Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. Muhammed was Ali's son by another wife, who belonged to the Hanifa tribe. Hence Muhammed's Arabic name, which means "Son of the Hanifite woman."

found here for the first time, as the *Mahdi*, "the Rightly Guided One," and was expected to inaugurate the dominion of righteousness on earth. A political adventurer, by the name of Mukhtar, succeeded in making this belief subservient to his own selfish interests, with the result that the Messianic idea became the slogan of a dangerous insurrection which was quelled in blood after a terrible struggle. When a little later Muhammed Ibn al-Hanafiyya mysteriously disappeared, without leaving a trace, the belief gained wide currency that he was not dead but that he had taken up his secret abode in the wooded mountains of Radhwa, where as the prince of peace he stood at the head of a Messianic Kingdom and whence in the fulness of Time he would manifest himself to extend the blessings of a Messianic existence to the rest of mankind. The depth of this belief may be gained from the fact that nearly one hundred years later two highly gifted Arabic poets, as-Sayyid al-Himyari and Kuthayyir, dedicated their genuine and inspired art to the propagation of this faith. The poems which celebrate Muhammed Ibn al-Hanafiyya as the Messiah are marked by a religious fervor and depth of feeling which is seldom matched in discipline-loving Islam. To illustrate the Messianic character of these ideas I may be permitted to reproduce a few verses from a poem of as-Sayyid al-Himyari in a literal translation:

> Years and months have passed since Ibn al-Hanafiyya has gone into hiding, but he still can be seen in a ridge of the Radhwa mountains, surrounded by leopards and lions. His abode is in the midst of mountain summits, whilst big-eyed kine and young ostriches march in the evening

side by side with freckled goats. Alongside of them the beasts of prey are seen feeding, yet none of these falls upon them with violence in order to tear them. There the tame beasts are safe from destruction, and they all feed with equal fearlessness on the same pasture grounds and at the same drinking place.

Many more Messianic references might be culled from the verses of these two poets but the above quotation will suffice to illustrate the general fact of the influence of the Messianic idea upon Muhammedanism.

From now on the Messianic hopes and speculations form a standing feature in the history of Islam. Innumerable pretenders arise to make similar claims, and suffer, together with their followers, defeat and death for their convictions. The fabric of Messianic ideas becomes more and more permeated with elements of Persian thought and carries in this new combination an even wider appeal. Out of the vast array of Messianic or Mahdistic movements in Islam I shall single out for a brief characterization two or three, which were particularly far-reaching in their consequences.

At the beginning of the tenth century a shrewd adventurer managed, with the help of forged genealogical records, to pass himself off as a descendant of Ali and gain credence for his claims as the Messiah. He became the founder of the Fatimid Caliphate, which for three centuries exerted so powerful an influence upon the destinies of Islam.

The Mahdistic beliefs form in like manner the substructure of the terrible propaganda of the Isma'iliyya party which freely resorted to crime and murder to blaze a path for its ambitions.

A most remarkable variety of the Mahdistic faith may be found in Persia where it still constitutes the official religion of the land. It is the doctrine of the so-called *Ithna-'ashariyya*, or "Twelvers." This Shiitic sect believes in twelve Mahdis who were all the direct descendants of Ali and who bequeathed the dignity of Mahdi from father to son. The eleventh Mahdi, called al-Hasan al-'Askari, died in the year 260 of the Hegira, leaving a little son by the name of Muhammed, who in his fifth year disappeared mysteriously through a subterranean passage. This five year old boy is believed to be the twelfth and last Mahdi, "the Rising One." According to the generally accepted belief of the Persian Shiites, Muhammed continues to live in hiding, but in the fulness of Time, he will arise in Messianic splendor as the Savior of the Faithful. For many centuries it was customary in Persia to keep saddled horses in readiness for him, so that he might appear on horseback when he came to inaugurate the golden age of the Messiah and fill the earth with justice, even as it is filled with injustice.

Thus far we have dealt exclusively with the Mahdistic movements within Shiitism, in which they find their psychological substructure and appear in their proper setting. In conclusion, we may be permitted to sketch briefly the attitude of the rest of Islam towards the question of the Madhi.

We have already had occasion to point out that in the early beginnings of Islam the party at the helm of the State was too well satisfied with the actual conditons of the present to foster aspirations of a

Messianic nature. But this happy condition was gradually changed. As a result of the constantly growing tyranny and profligacy of the ruling Caliphs the lands of Islam sank to ever lower depths of economic misery, and the political prestige of the Muhammedan power could not escape the effects of the general decline. It was therefore natural that Mahdistic expectations should also gain a footing in the orthodox section of Islam. But, not being attached to definite personalities as they were in Shiitism, these hopes remained of a purely impersonal character and were perforce reduced to an abstract eschatological conception, according to which at the end of Time there will arise a Mahdi who will fill the earth with justice. But here this Messianic expectation was bound to clash with the already existing belief in the Second Coming of Christ, who, as we have seen, was equally destined to fill the earth with justice. The functions assigned to Christ and to the Mahdi had become mere duplicates. However, the resourceful theologians of Islam were quick in adjusting this difficulty They effected a compromise between the two conflicting views which has been generally accepted by the Muhammedans. According to this compromise, the Mahdi will be the first to appear and to inaugurate the golden age. The latter will then be interrupted by the appearance of the Anti-Christ, or the Dajjal,—as he is called in Arabic,—whereupon Jesus will manifest himself and establish permanently the Kingdom of the Messiah.

Yet the Mahdistic belief of orthodox Islam cannot compare either in validity or in popularity with that of Shiitism. To realize this we only have to recall the

fact that in orthodox Islam it never became a binding article of faith, so that, to quote but one instance out of many, the followers of the strictly orthodox Hanefite system of law—one of the four accepted legal systems in Islam—openly refuse to acknowledge it, whilst a number of theologians of the highest standing and of unimpeachable orthodoxy who adhere to the other legal systems maintain an equally sceptical attitude towards it.

* * *

The history of the Mahdistic movements form a gloomy chapter in the annals of Muhammedanism. A heavy trail of blood marks the course followed by them. Untold sacrifices, both of mind and of body, have been offered on the altar of the Mahdi doctrine throughout the centuries. Round about it has been piled up a huge mound of unconscious deceit and deliberate fraud, of fanciful, nay preposterous speculations. Yet out of this repulsive chaos there breaks forth the yearning cry after the golden age when the earth will be filled with justice, even as it is now filled with injustice. It is this cry which exercises upon us, the men of a modern age, an equally soothing and appeasing effect. For, however insistently cold scientific speculation may remind us of the blind brutal laws of nature; however emphatically modern philosophic thought may repudiate a world view which is based upon the pursuit of human happiness, at the very bottom of our souls there still persists the saving belief in a Messianic future when the earth will no more be full of injustice, and when humanity will be governed by the ideals of justice and righteousness.

X

MOSES MAIMONIDES*

WHEN the generation which arose after Maimonides crystallized its estimate of this great personality in the famous epigram: *Mi-moshe we-'ad Moshe lo kom ke-Moshe*, "From Moses till Moses there was none like Moses," and thus put Moshe ben Maimon on the same level with Moshe ben Amram—its intention was not merely to emphasize the overwhelming greatness of Maimonides, but rather to accentuate his unique position in Jewish life. Just as Moses, according to the well-known doctrine of Maimonides, differed from the other prophets not merely in degree, but in essence, so Maimonides himself, in the opinion of posterity, was not only superior to other great men in Jewish history, but stood on an altogether different level.

Maimonides was the greatest Jewish thinker, the greatest Jewish scholar, perhaps the greatest Jewish writer, and one of the greatest Jewish individualities—but the uniqueness of Maimonides, which made posterity compare him with Moses, "the man of God," lies elsewhere; it lies in the fact that Maimonides, like Moses, took up the gigantic problem of

*Address delivered at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, December 28, 1904, at the commemoration of the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of Maimonides. Published for the first time in the *New Era Illustrated Magazine* (New York) January, 1905.

Judaism in its totality and tried to solve it in its totality. Maimonides was one of the most many-sided personalities known in Jewish history—for, in addition to all his other qualifications, he was also a famous physician and a great mathematician and astronomer,—and to convey an adequate idea of all the activities of Maimonides within the narrow limits of a lecture, would be an achievement possible only for the unparalleled systematic mind of a Maimonides. Therefore, on the solemn occasion offered by our celebration tonight, I may be permitted to discuss only those features of Maimonides which constitute his uniqueness, and to touch upon the others merely in passing.

When Maimonides appeared on the scene, the sun of the Jewish-Arabic period had already passed its zenith. For more than four centuries had this sun shed its rays upon the Jews, bringing thousands of germs to blossom, ripening a rich harvest on which we still feed today. The fruits of that harvest were plentiful and multifarious. The spiritual inheritance of Judaism was fostered and increased in all directions. The science of Judaism sprang up in incomparable beauty. The Bible, the Hebrew language, Hebrew poetry, the Talmud, the Halaka—all became the object of most careful and most fruitful study. At the same time, the thoughts and spiritual achievements of the non-jews were assiduously cultivated and assimilated, and many endeavors made toward reconciling them with the content of Judaism. Maimonides, who surpassed all his predecessors in ability and learning, also surpassed them in the success of his work.

He made the whole intellectual wealth of the age his own possession. In the field both of Jewish learning and of non-Jewish thought he brought these endeavors to perfection. He was a greater scholar and a greater philosopher than all his predecessors, but the feature that distinguishes him from all others and constitutes his uniqueness is the fact that, in contradistinction from all others, he undertook with perfect consciousness the task to utilize learning and thought for life.

We are accustomed in our days to boast of being in possession of pure science, of an unconditioned philosophy, which are independent of time and space and pay no regard to the interests of life. At bottom, however, this is but a self-delusion. Science and philosophy are born of the human intellect which, consciously or unconsciously, is influenced by human emotions, and these in turn are dictated by life. Not that Maimonides intended to falsify science and philosophy to meet the conveniences of life, but his eye of genius perceived the invisible threads, which run from the abstract domain of thought to the firm soil of reality, and he transformed the dead mass of learning into living energy. In this way he promoted the real interests of learning. For, as our sages say, "Great is that learning which calls forth practical work," or, as the founder of modern Jewish Science (Zunz) put it: *Wahre Wissenschaft ist tatenerzeugend*, "Real learning brings forth great deeds."

And life at that time did present the Jewish people with a great problem. It was neither more nor less than the question of the preservation of Judaism. The sun of the Jewish-Arabic period had passed its

zenith not only in spiritual, but also in political life. Islam, which includes among its five fundamental precepts the *Jihad*, the "holy war" against the unbelievers, was infinitely kinder toward the Jews than was Christianity with its theoretical tenet of brotherly love. Yet, in the course of time the Mohammedans learned from the Christians. A period of persecutions began. The fanatical Almohades, the "Unitarians" of Islam, arose in Northern Africa and compelled the "unbelievers" to choose between expulsion and conversion. In Southern Arabia, in Yemen, conditions were similar. In most Christian countries the Jews were scarcely happier. Everywhere their position was unsafe, and their welfare depended upon the whims of the rulers. Heavy storms were approaching. It was necessary to equip the ship of Judaism in order that she might resist the coming tempest. There were sufficient, nay, abundant provisions on board, but the question was how to make the best use of them.

It is a matter of regret that we are not fully acquainted with the spiritual conditions which prevailed at the time of Maimonides. But as far as we may judge from the writings of Maimonides himself, there were three different classes of Jews. First there was the bulk of the people, ignorant and stolid. To be sure, ignorance of Judaism was not yet as fashionable nor as extensive as it is nowadays; still, the Jews of that age did not appear sufficiently equipped for a stubborn resistance. Nearly all of them were able to read and understand the Pentateuch, but this was about all. They were ignorant of the whole field of

Jewish tradition, and in their practical life were slavishly dependent upon the Talmudists.

These, in turn, formed the second class. They were absorbed in the hair-splitting discussions of theTalmud and lacked all understanding for the needs of their time or the thoughts of their period. Their Judaism was confined to the "four ells of the Halaka," and, excluded from light and air, it became damp and mouldy.

Finally there were the "intellectuals," the thinkers, who had absorbed both the content of Judaism and the results of non-Jewish culture, but were unable to bring them into harmony with each other. These heterogeneous elements within them were constantly struggling with one another, and the inner conflict created a split in their whole spiritual life, destroying their energy and their power of resistance.

At that moment, Maimonides made his appearance, and with his matchless genius brought help and salvation to all the classes of Jews, leading them on a level road to the sources of Judaism, presenting them with a comprehensive system of Jewish thought and practice, showing them the unity between religion and philosophy, and so enabling them to face with confidence the persecutions that were approaching. We are hardly in a position fully to realize what Maimonides was to the Jews of his time. When, this day seven hundred years ago, on the 20th of Tebet, 4965, the Jews of Egypt, having ordered a public fast, read in their synagogues the chapter of the Pentateuch threatening the Jewish nation with awful disasters in case of disobedience, and recited

from the prophets the story of the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines, they thereby gave expression to their conviction that the death of Maimonides was a national disaster, and that his disappearance from their midst was equivalent to the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, the source of Divine information and inspiration.

At this point I should like to insert a few brief remarks concerning the life and personality of Maimonides, which form a proper background for his activity. Maimonides died at the age of nearly seventy. He was born on the 14th of Nissan (March 30th) 1135, at one o'clock in the afternoon—this unique record of the exact hour of his birth showing the importance which his contemporaries assigned to the event. He was born in Cordova of an aristocratic Jewish family, which had furnished that community with rabbis—then an unpaid and honorary post—for seven generations. His father Maimon was a highly cultured man, versed both in the sources of Judaism and in the science and literature of the Mohammedans. His first education Maimonides probably received from his father, but he pursued and perfected it under Jewish and Mohammedan teachers. When Maimonides was thirteen years of age, Cordova was conquered by the Almohades, and he and his family were forced to flee from their native land. During the following years they had to be wanderers. A few years they resided in Fez, in Northern Africa, and for a short time sojourned in the Holy Land.

We have very little knowledge about these years of Maimonides' life. This lack of information,

coupled with the eagerness of the Mohammedan writers to make this overwhelming personality one of their own, gave rise to the conjecture that Maimonides became externally a convert to Islam. But this accusation, which, unfortunately enough, is repeated by some Jewish scholars, has no foundation in fact. It is refuted by the mere consideration that in the extremely vehement polemics which broke out after the death of Maimonides and centered around his person none of his opponents ever makes mention of this alleged conversion, which would surely have proved an effective weapon in the hands of his enemies to discredit his life work.

Be this as it may, Maimonides devoted these years of his life, as best he could, to the interests of Judaism. For during his wanderings, he composed—often, as he himself tells us, working aboard ship, or sojourning at an inn—his first great work, the Commentary on the Mishnah. At last he established himself in Cairo, in the neighborhood called Fostat, under the tolerant sceptre of Saladin. After the death of his brother, with whom he had been associated in the jewelry trade, he made up his mind to put his great medical knowledge to practical use and gradually grew to be a famous physician employed both by the court and all the classes of the population. In one of his letters he draws a most vivid picture of this extensive practice, which occupied him day and night and scarcely left him time for his meals. In spite of these absorbing professional duties, he was able—it sounds almost mysterious—to discharge the functions of a rabbi—without remuneration, of course,—to answer

the numberless religious questions addressed to him from almost all the corners of the globe, and to write his two other standard works, the Rabbinical code *Mishne Torah*, and his philosophic work *More Nebukhim*, in addition to a number of other books and treatises on Jewish and secular topics.

He had the satisfaction of having, in Joseph ibn Aknin, a pupil who worshipped him and nevertheless —understood him, and of seeing his only son Abraham, born to him in his fiftieth year, grow up in his spirit and cultivate his ideals. He died, when not yet seventy, of physical exhaustion, with the joyous conviction that he had faithfully done his duty toward his own generation and the generations to come.

The character of Maimonides is equalled only by his intellect. It represents a beautiful harmony between the perfect poise, the *sophrosyne*, of the Greek philosopher, and the deep earnestness of the Jewish *Talmid Haham*. Although theoretically conceiving the practical commandments of the Law as a means toward an end for the masses, he did not belong to that class of people who like religious practices only when performed by others, but himself observed the ceremonial law with the greatest punctiliousness. He was indignant when somebody once charged him with neglecting a certain religious custom, even though he himself had declared it in his Code to be immaterial.

> May Heaven and Earth bear witness for me that I never neglected it—he apologizes in one of his letters.—Why should I change my own custom and the custom of my fathers without a reason, as long as it is not contrary to the Law?

His energy was inexhaustible; else he would not have been able to accomplish the tremendous work he actually succeeded in accomplishing. He was always true to himself, and in his activity never paid any attention to the blame or praise of the people, but acted merely according to his innermost conviction. In spite of the fame he had attained, he remained amiable, accessible to everybody, extremely modest,—not with that kind of modesty which is only a refined form of vanity, but with that true modesty which measures achievements not by the shortcomings of others but by the greatness of the task.

He was fully aware that his legal code was the greatest achievement since the days of the Mishnah; he was firmly convinced that it would ultimately become an authoritative book for future generations, when the jealousy and conceit of his contemporaries would have disappeared. Yet at the same time he resolutely declined to take any measures against the envious scholars in his own community who thought it beneath their dignity even to look at his work.

> I shall never try—Maimonides declares in a letter—to fight for my own sake. My dignity and the purity of my character are more of an honor to me than fighting the fools with my tongue and my pen.

And in a letter to his favorite pupil, Joseph Ibn Aknin, he writes in a similar strain:

> You must know that I am always ready to yield, although it would do me much harm in the eyes of the multitude. And every one who tries to prove his own perfection by my imperfection, even if he be the least among scholars, will be readily forgiven by me.

I could quote numerous passages of the same kind, showing the admirable and lovable disposition of Maimonides. But we have to return to our main subject and show in what way Maimonides acquitted himself of his task.

This task demanded enormous, unparalleled powers, which could be found side by side only in Maimonides. First, he was the possessor of an incomparable erudition, so that he was able, despite constant wanderings, and without having a book at his disposal, to compose, at the age of twenty-three, his vast commentary on the Mishnah, dealing with nearly all branches of human knowledge. Maimonides was one of the greatest systematizers that ever lived. It is a common charge, which, raised by non-Jews, is faithfully believed by Jews, that our people lack all sense of system. But had the Jews produced only the one Maimonides, they might point to him as a most effective argument to prove the absurdity of that charge.

Maimonides was a writer of extraordinary power and elegance. But Maimonides was much more, besides. He was, and this is perhaps his greatest distinction, not only a logician but a psychologist. This is a most important point. Maimonides is usually considered a rationalist, and justly so. Reason, thinking, is the standard by which he measures everything. "Never should man," says Maimonides in his epistle to the Jews of Marseilles, "throw his reason behind him, for his eyes are not in the back but in the front." This follows necessarily from his system of philosophy which declares thinking

to be the ultimate destiny of mankind and the only way of attaining to some share in Divine providence and immortality. He unreservedly follows his reason. Although fully aware that the acceptance of the theory of the "eternity of the world," as taught by Aristotle, unavoidably leads to the annihilation of all positive religion, he rejects this doctrine not on account of its being anti-religious, but on account of its lacking a solid philosophic foundation. He speaks in sarcastic terms of the Mohammedan philosophers and their Jewish apers, who are satisfied with an artificial reconciliation between Religion and Philosophy, and take the facts not as they are, but as they would like them to be.

But we would totally misapprehend the attitude of Maimonides and do him a gross injustice were we to consider him exclusively a rationalist. Maimonides declared reason to be the highest authority in philosophical and spiritual matters. But he was not one of those one-sided rationalists, those narrow-minded *Maskilim*, who consider man to be a thinking engine, a reasoning slot machine which responds only when a logical formula is thrown into it,—who swear by the old superficial doctrine of Socrates that man has but to know virtue in order to practice it. Maimonides understood better than any one of his predecessors and contemporaries that human life is not ruled by thoughts and formulas but by emotions, that thoughts, therefore, first have to be transformed into emotions in order to become a real power in life. Just as the celestial spheres, according to the doctrine of Maimonides, are able to move only because their

logical contemplation of God has become a psychological desire for God, so human actions can be called forth not by the recognition of the truth, but by the desire for the truth.

This perception marks Maimonides as a great pedagogue. For to be a pedagogue means to understand human nature, to be able to put one's self into the soul of another, to be content with standards and demands which one has himself outgrown. Maimonides learned this pedagogy from his great model Moses, whose activity he conceived primarily as that of a pedagogue. Although the religious commandments have to be performed without any regard to reward or punishment, yet he unhesitatingly declares that "it does not matter if the multitude fulfills the commandments out of fear of punishment." The materialistic conception of life after death is most repugnant to him, and he makes the greatest efforts to combat it. Still, when a Jew of Bagdad, who professed to be an ignoramus, asked him for an explanation of what the future life really was, he made the following characteristic reply:

> As for your request to explain to you the immortality of the soul, I have given in my various writings all the explanations which are necessary, and I have tried my best to make it as intelligible as possible. But I should advise you not to burden your mind with these deep questions, for the conception of incorporeal beings is extremely difficult even for great scholars—how much more for beginners who have no experience in these matters. You had better form for yourself an idea which you are able to understand. It will not injure your religious convictions if you believe that those partaking in the future life are bodies, so long as the belief in its reality becomes firmly established in your

> heart. Even if you believe that they eat, drink and beget their kind somewhere in the uppermost heaven or in Paradise, it will not do any harm to your faith. There are many other things of which, though they are far more intelligible, people are ignorant, and still ignorance of them does not injure the principles of their religious belief.

Metaphysical thought, according to Maimonides, is the ultimate goal of man. It bestows upon him the greatest happiness, and it alone enables him to have a share in immortality and in Divine providence. Still he warns the people again and again to keep aloof from metaphysics. Meat and wine, to use his own simile, are excellent articles of food, but they are bound to have a most injurious effect upon the infant, who is unable to digest them. The philosopher is allowed, nay, is obliged, to search after the principles of religion, but the multitude is advised to stop at the comparatively harmless question of the reasons underlying the ceremonial laws. By thus taking into account the numerous gradations in the human intellect, and according to each of them individual treatment, he contributed more than any one else toward spreading a philosophical conception of Judaism among the masses of the Jewish people.

These pedagogical principles betray themselves also in the details of his activity. Maimonides was an aristocrat through and through,—an aristocrat, however, who considers his rank not a privilege but a duty. He was not only an aristocrat by virtue of his birth, his family claiming descent from King David, but first and foremost also an aristocrat by virtue of his intellect. The distinction between the *hamon* and the *yehidim*, the "many" and the "few," or the

masses and the classes, is of most common occurrence in his writings. His philosophical system pays but little attention to the masses. "The multitude," says Maimonides in the Introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah, "is created to serve the philosopher," to prepare for him the necessaries of life. But his practical sense made Maimonides understand that the existence of a nation is based upon the masses, and that the preservation of Judaism depends at least as much on the education of the crowd as on the philosophical contemplation of the "select." It is not mere chance, but a logical inference from his system of thought, that the first two standard works of Maimonides are devoted to the instruction of the masses, and that only his third and last book appeals to the philosophers. The enormous scientific activity of Maimonides is consciously directed towards this one goal: the perpetuation of Judaism by making the people *understand* and, in understanding, *love* Judaism, thus enabling them to fight for it and suffer for it. In this aspect Maimonides' activity is eminently practical—practical not in the sense of responding to the petty interests of the day, but rather in the sense of considering the needs of the age and of the generations to come.

When still in his early "twenties," Maimonides saw the whole scheme of his life work before him. At an age when others are in the throes of their *Sturm und Drang* period, his mind and character were perfectly matured and settled. Maimonides did not claim to be infallible. On the contrary, he was wont to claim credit for his readiness to confess his shortcomings

and modify his statements as soon as he recognized them to be erroneous. But it was only in details that such modifications were ever necessary. As for his general aims, they never underwent a change, and just as his philosophical views remained the same during all his life, in spite of zealous and incessant study, so his literary work was the gradual unfolding of a firmly established scheme. In his first work are indicated the outlines of his last work, and in his last work he refers to his first: one proof more for Maimanides' incomparably systematic trend of mind.

In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, on which we shall have to say more presently, he tells us that he had written commentaries on the Talmud, and it is worth while noticing—he himself directs our attention to this fact—that these commentaries concerned themselves with the very tractates which had special application to the practical life of the Jew. However, his work of commenting the Talmud remained unfinished, and as much of it as was finished has been lost. Both circumstances are probably due to the fact that Maimonides laid no special stress on the propagation of the Talmud. And here again we have the real Maimonides before us. Maimonides was filled with the deepest reverence and awe for the Talmud and its teachers. He speaks in touching terms of their widsom and their saintliness. His life was chiefly devoted to the study of the Talmud and entirely governed by Talmudical practice, and—"by their fruits shall ye know them"—his son, at the same time his disciple, was at least as much of a Talmudist as he was of a philosopher. But Mai-

monides' life work was not determined by his personal likes and dislikes, but by the interests of Judaism. Looked at from this standpoint, the subtle and lengthy discussions of the Talmud, while an intellectual pleasure and a worthy object of religious study for the scholar, seemed but of little value to the masses, who needed practical information in their everyday duties. These considerations decided Maimonides to turn to another source of Jewish lore, itself a systematic condensation of the mental activity of the preceding generations, and ranking in Jewish estimation as the holiest book after the Bible. Thus Maimonides undertook to interpret the Mishnah.

In the course of time the Mishnah had become difficult and unintelligible. Its vocabulary, its diction and its subject-matter were quite alien to the new generation. Besides, the editor of the Mishnah often embodied in his code several conflicting opinions, without rendering a decision,—and the decision was, of course, most important for the religious practice. Maimonides, therefore, took the task upon himself of making the Mishnah again a possession of the Jewish people.

His Commentary on the Mishnah, the first fruit of ten years of indefatigable labor, has remained unsurpassed to this very day. In accordance with his disposition, Maimonides prefaces every new tractate by a comprehensive introduction, which in every word displays the power of his genius. The whole Mishnah is introduced by a lengthy and careful treatise of great scientific value, outlining in masterly fashion the development of the Oral Law. The individual

Mishnahs are supplied with a concise, yet complete interpretation of the text and its contents, and the decision which is to be followed in practical life is invariably stated.

At the same time Maimonides successfully pursued another end. The Mishnah often refers to matters of a scientific, moral or philosophical character. Whenever such an occasion presents itself, as soon as —to use Maimonides' own words—there is to be perceived a mere odor of philosophy, he gladly seizes the opportunity to develop, in a most attractive and popular, and yet profound and exhaustive manner, the elements of other branches of learning, thus making his commentary not only a source of information for religious practice, but also a fountain-head of inspiration for religious thought and secular knowledge.

The next literary work of Maimonides presupposes this one. He consciously takes up the thread where Rabbi Judah Hanassi, the redactor of the Mishnah, had dropped it. Just as the Mishnah presents a resumé of the activity of the generations preceding it, so Maimonides intended to condense in his new work the results of his predecessors down to his own day. But the task was now an infinitely greater one. In the interval between Judah Hanassi and Maimonides both Talmuds, that of Babylonia and that of Palestine, had sprung up, accompanied by an enormous literature, which partly preceded and partly succeeded them. The material which had been piled up during the centuries, without plan and without system, had grown to unwieldy dimensions, but it remained a dead mass. Only very few were able to

make themselves familiar with it. The Jews of that time were too much occupied with practical life and engaged in too many interests to devote their lives to the study of this literature with that extraordinary concentration and self-denial which afterwards became so conspicuous a feature in the life of the Jews of Poland. Nay, even the "few" were not able to turn their studies to good advantage. The material was without any unifying bond. It offered a mass of information, but no knowledge. Thus Maimonides conceived a gigantic scheme, which meant no less than sifting, arranging and illuminating the entire immense material heaped up by all preceding generations, thereby rendering superfluous the whole literature before him.

A gross injustice is often done to Maimonides by those who charge him with the intention of superseding the Talmud altogether. In one of his letters he indignantly refutes this charge by pointing to the fact that he himself was a zealous student of the Talmud, and delivered lectures on Talmudic subjects. Maimonides looked upon the Talmud as a most important and most meritorious object of study —but only for scholars. He could not fail to realize that the people at large were not scholars and were not in a position to devote their whole life to study It was then for the mass of the people alone that he intended to supersede the Talmud by making a comprehensive extract from it.

> In our times—he says in his introduction to the work of which we are now speaking—disasters continually follow one another. The need of the moment sets aside every other consideration. The wisdom of our wise men is lost,

and the learning of our learned men is hidden. Therefore all the interpretations, codes and responsa, which the Geonim composed, and which they thought were easy of understanding, have become unintelligible in our days, and there are but few who are able to understand them properly. As to the Talmuds themselves, both the Babylonian and the Palestinian, and the other Talmudic literature, I have no need to say that they require wide knowledge and great intelligence, and that it takes a long time before anyone can find out the right way concerning all the things permitted and forbidden, and concerning all the other commandments of the Law.

On account of this, I, Moses, the son of Maimon, the Spaniard, have girded my loins and put my trust in the Lord—blessed be He— and studied all these works and made up my mind to collect the results derived from them, bearing on the regulations concerning things forbidden or permitted, pure or impure, and all the other commandments of the Torah—expounding them all in precise language and in a concise manner, so that the entire oral law may be made accessible to everyone, without any arguments or counter-arguments, but in clear and unmistakable terms, in entire accord with the decision which may be deduced from all the treatises and interpretations existing since the time of Rabbi Judah Hanassi, the compiler of the Mishnah, until the present day. In short, my intention is that no man shall have any need to resort to any other book on any point of Jewish law. . . . For this reason I called the name of this work *Mishne Torah*, "the second Torah," for all that a man has to do is to read first the Written Law (the Bible) and follow it up by this work, and he will know the entire Oral Law, without the need of reading any other book between them.

The significance of this gigantic work can hardly be overestimated. This is not the place nor is it my function to give an elaborate estimate of Maimonides' great code. Suffice it to say that the "Second Law"

of Maimonides is considered by many competent critics the greatest work in Jewish literature after the Bible. The difference between his code and the Talmud is the same as between a warehouse of accumulated materials and a magnificent palace. The warehouse no doubt contains a vast amount of valuable stuff; one may find there silver and gold, and very often even jewels. But all these treasures make the proper impression only when arranged in order and co-ordinated with one another. The palace of Maimonides betrays the marvelous architect. The tremendous edifice is, as it were, of one cast. There is a ravishing harmony in all its parts. The foundation is made up of the basic conceptions of the Aristotelian system of thought, and the top loses itself in the lofty clouds of the Messianic ideal, proclaiming a time when the "knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

With the completion of his legal code Maimonides had discharged his duty toward the "many." They were now sufficiently provided for. They had been supplied with a criterion for their religious practice and a content for their religious thought. Equipped with the Bible and the *Mishne Torah*, the Jewish people could confidently continue its wanderings and face any persecution that might be approaching. Now there remained the less important, yet a most sublime and most delicate duty toward the "few." They were really *yehidim*, "single ones," "one out of a city, and two out of a tribe," but Maimonides, the aristocrat, assures us that he cares more for one of these "few" than "for ten thousand fools." These

yehidim devoted their lives to learning. They were familiar with Jewish culture, possessing at the same time a thorough knowledge of the science and philsophy of the age. These different elements in their make-up were in constant struggle with one another. There was a wide breach in the souls of these men. They felt dissatisfied. They experienced spiritual torture, constantly wavering, as they did, between the two poles represented by the abstract Aristotelian definition of God as self-thinking, on the one hand, and by the anthropomorphistic narratives and concrete as well as minute precepts of Bible and Talmud, on the other. Many an attempt had been made to reconcile the two spheres of thought, but they had not proved successful. Either Aristotle or Judaism got the worst of it. This task could be satisfactorily performed—so far as it could be performed at all—only by one who, besides possessing an incomparable power of synthesis, mastered in an equally incomparable manner both Greek thought and the content of Judaism.

This task was undertaken and finished by Maimonides in his third *magnus opus*, in his *Moreh Nebukhim*, "The Guide of the Perplexed," a book which marks an epoch not only in the history of Jewish thought, but also in that of the general thought of the Middle Ages. The *Moreh* is written in the form of letters addressed to his pupil Joseph ibn Aknin. Maimonides proceeds with the utmost deliberation and caution. He describes his long hesitation before determining on writing this book. He was not afraid of the harm he might personally

suffer from the attacks of the multitude, which were likely to come, and actually did come. His fear was rather that the multitude might suffer harm in its faith as a result of this book. He, therefore, takes every possible precaution to keep the masses away from it. He warns his pupil against lending his copy of the *Moreh* to anyone. He lays down a long string of conditions which alone qualify one to read it. He makes the greatest efforts to be unintelligible, to speak in hints and allusions,—though the logical mind of Maimonides was stronger than his intention, and the lucidity of his work is paralleled only by its depth.

The *Moreh* constitutes, as was stated above, the attempt to effect a reconciliation between the ideas of Aristotle and the doctrines of Judaism. Aristotle was for Maimonides the incarnation of human thought. He declares him to be "the ultimate station attainable by the intelligence of man." He often speaks of him as "the highest of those who ever philosophized," and calls him the "chief of the philosophers." He follows him with absolute confidence, without any mental reservation. Aristotle was "*the* Philosopher" to that entire age. But more than to any one else he was so to Maimonides, who in his whole intellectual make-up resembled so strikingly the Stagirite, and may properly be called the Jewish Aristotle.

In order to show the extent and the importance of the problem which confronted Maimonides in his *Moreh*, let me sketch in a few rough strokes the leading thoughts of Aristotle, as they were subsequently modified by the ideas of the neo-Platonists, by the

interpretations of the Arabic philosophers, and by the original and independent formulation of Maimonides himself.

The underlying idea of the whole Aristotelian system is the conception of Matter and Form, or, translated into corresponding modern terms, of Matter and Mind. Matter is only possibility, or potentiality; Mind is actuality. The constantly shifting combinations of Matter and Mind constitute the movement, and thereby the process, of the world. Every movement has a cause; this cause another cause, and so on until we at last arrive at the First Cause, at the Cause of Causes—at God. God is pure mind, pure actuality. He is the cause of movement; yet, having no cause, is Himself unmoved: the unmoved Mover. God as pure mind can exercise only one activity: thinking. Being the perfect mind, He can think only the perfect object: Himself. Thus God becomes personified Self-Thinking.

The nature of God having been defined in this manner, the question is bound to arise as to the relation of this abstract God to the world of matter with all its numberless phenomena. Aristotle simply sets aside this question by maintaining the co-existence of the world with God, in other words, the eternity of the world. Looked at from this point of view, God ceases to be the Creator, of even the Ruler, of the world, and becomes an impersonal, abstract principle, "a pale cast of thought."

No positive religion with its beliefs and commandments can start from such a conception. Maimonides clearly realizes that the acceptance of the eternity

of the world is identical with the destruction of all positive religion. Nevertheless, he proudly declines to take refuge in any glittering philosophic generalities. In a cool and unbiased manner he examines closely the foundations of this Aristotelian belief. He proves that this hypothesis of Aristotle was meant by Aristotle himself to be taken as no more than an hypothesis, and shows further, in a way that vividly reminds us of Kant, that there can never be any certainty about this question, the whole problem being, as Kant would say, transcendental, *i. e.*, lying beyond the limits of the human understanding. Wherever human reason is incompetent the philosopher is entitled—and here again Maimonides is in agreement with Kant—to follow the teachings of religion. The world once created, then God is a Creator, a Ruler,—no longer a faint, abstract principle, but a personal being, full of reality. Thus the foundation of positive religion is found to rest upon philosophical probability, but a probability, which by inner religious certitude,—Kant would say by Practical Reason,—is raised to the level of an undoubted belief.

But how is the relation between God, the pure Mind, and the world of Matter to be conceived in detail? The reply to this question presupposes the cosmological system of Aristotle, with the peculiar modifications and additions of the later philosophers. The world, according to Aristotle, and, of course, according to Maimonides, consists of two sharply marked realms: of the world beneath the moon, the so-called sublunar world, and the world above the

moon, the world of the stars, or the spheres. The sublunar world is made up of the four elements and is therefore subject to rise and decay; the spheres, on the other hand, consist of ether, and are eternal. The spheres are living beings, endowed with an intelligence, surpassing by far that of man. Every sphere has its own ruler, a Separate Intelligence, *i. e.*, an intelligence which is separated from matter and consists of pure mind. The contemplation of God, the purest mind, and the desire to reach him sets the spheres in motion. This motion being circular, the spheres have to move in all eternity, without being able to reach the object of their desire. The sublunar world, or the earth, is ruled by the Active Intellect, *i. e.*, that Separate Intelligence which is attached to the moon sphere. Through the instrumentality of the Active Intellect movement is produced in this world, and potentiality developed into actuality.

Everything in the sublunar world is perishable, including man. He falls asunder into his four elements. But, in distinction from all other beings, he is endowed with mentality which is implanted in him as a mere disposition, but by human effort this disposition can be developed into the Acquired Intellect. By means of the Acquired Intellect man is connected with the Active Intellect of the moon sphere and, through the intercession of the latter, with the Divine Being. It thus depends upon man himself and upon his endeavor to develop his mind whether and to what extent he may be connected with God, whether and to what extent he may share in Divine Providence and Immortality. Development of the mind means,

of course, nothing else than thinking, thinking of the Highest, of God; in other words, metaphysics. In this way metaphysics becomes the final destiny of mankind.

While thinking must be regarded as the ultimate goal of mankind, it nevertheless requires many lower activities for its realization. It requires, first, morality, consisting in the *mesotes*, the "golden mean," the balance between two extremes; it requires, moreover, the satisfaction of the needs of the body, which again presupposes a social order. Only after fulfilling these conditions man is able to devote himself to thinking, to metaphysics. In this manner morality and the social order are justified as a substructure for philosophy.

Thus far the system of Aristotle in its general outlines. Even from this crude sketch it becomes evident that the ideas of Aristotle are different from the teachings of the Bible, with its vivid narratives and positive commandments. A reconciliation seems impossible.

Still Maimonides managed to effect this apparently impossible synthesis. He was charged with hypocrisy. But those who make this charge show a complete failure to comprehend either the convictions of Maimonides or the ideas of his age. Maimonides was perfectly honest and consistent in trying to bring about this reconciliation. As a matter of fact, it was entirely impossible for him to do otherwise. For thoroughly convinced as he was of the truth of the Aristotelian system, he was just as much, and even more so, convinced of the truth of the teachings of

Moses. Maimonides did not for a single moment in his whole life doubt the Divine origin of the Torah. In the work of his early youth, in the Commentary on the Mishnah, he formulates this belief with the utmost emphasis.

> There is no difference—he says[1], with regard to the question of the Divine origin of the Pentateuch—between the verses: "And the sons of Ham are Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan," or "And the name of his wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred," and the verses: "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt," or "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, The Lord is One."

In our own days this confession may sound surprising in the mouth of a man who declares Reason to be the judge of dogmas. But we must try to understand Maimonides from an historical point of view. No Jew prior to Maimonides, not even during the Jewish-Arabic period, in spite of its many thinkers, ever denied the Divine origin of the Pentateuch, or doubted the correctness of the facts reported by it. The philosopher Bahya Ibn Pakuda, who lived a century before Maimonides, mentions a class of Jews who do not accept the Torah, but still "are unable to refute the wonders and deny the miracles performed by the prophets, on account of their wide publicity."[2] Similarly, the heathen king of the Khazars, in the philosophical dialogue by Bahya's contemporary, Judah Halevi, after having heard from his opponent the biblical story of the Exodus, exclaims enthusiastically:

[1] Sanhedrin, *Perek Helek*. See later p. 196.

[2] *Hoboth Halebaboth* ii, 4.

> This is surely a Divine miracle, and all the ceremonies connected with it have to be performed, for there can be no question of witchcraft, or deceit, or imagination. Granted that the Red Sea before their eyes, its being split and their passage through it was a product of the imagination, how could their deliverance from slavery, the death of their oppressors and the fact of having appropriated their garments and keeping possession of their money—how could all this be taken as a product of the imagination. Such can only be the attitude of a stubborn skeptic.[1]

The modern conception of legend was entirely wanting. Literary criticism was a thing unknown. But more than by the absence of negative skepticism was the belief in the Torah upheld by positive influences. The conviction of the Divine origin of the Torah was not coldly abstracted from consumptive catechisms; it impressed itself upon the mind of the Jew as the result of continuous study and the incessant practice of the Law. The Book of the Law, to paraphrase the biblical words (Joshua I, 8), never departed out of his mouth, but he meditated therein day and night that he might observe to do according to all that is written therein. Under these circumstances even the "chief of the philosophers" was powerless to shake the psychological foundations of Jewish belief. The doctrines of Moses representing no less absolute truth than that of Aristotle, the deduction, according to the mathematical formula: a = b, b = c, hence a = c, naturally was that they were identical.

It is evident that this identity could not be established except by way of allegorical interpretation. Aristotle was too scientific and too exact to bear

[1] *Kusari*, i, 84.

allegorization. Hence the one to suffer could only be the Bible.

But why does not Moses utter his truths as plainly as Aristotle? The answer is most ingenious and entirely convincing to that age. Man creates God in his own image. Maimonides, the great pedagogue who endeavors to keep his philosophical views from the immature multitude, discovers the same pedagogic disposition in Moses. The Bible does not, like the *Organon* of Aristotle, address itself to a limited number of highly cultivated philosophers. The Bible is a popular book. It makes its appeal to the entire people and to all classes. "Gather the people together," says God to Moses, "*men, women and children* . . . that they may hear . . . all the words of this Law" (Deuteronomy xxxi, 12). The Bible speaks at one and the same time to the profound thinker and to the unsophisticated child. Had the Torah expressed its metaphysical truths in clear, plain language, they would not only have remained entirely unintelligible to the mass of the people, but, by being misunderstood, they would in addition have wrought confusion and mischief. For this reason the Torah preferred to clothe its doctrines in the garb of tales and allegories, which, taken by the "many" in a literal sense, and by the "few" in an allegorical sense, exercised over both of them a religious influence, which may differ in degree, but is equally beneficial. This example of a two-fold meaning which was set by Moses was followed by the prophets and the other biblical writers, and later on also by the sages of Talmud and Midrash, whose words, as Maimonides puts it, "are like a few bits of core enveloped

by numerous husks, so that sometimes the people become absorbed in the husks and think that there is no core in them at all."[1]

The method by which Maimonides discovers the system of Aristotle in the Torah excites our utmost admiration. Here his synthetic genius celebrates its greatest triumphs. Many a time we must summon all our modern skepticism to our aid in order to escape the net of allegorical explanation so skilfully laid by the hand of a master. Of course, in many cases, the interpretations of Maimonides impress us as artificial and affected. Maimonides did not write for readers of the twentieth century, but for the Jews of the twelfth century. And for them, with a spiritual life akin to his own, with the same opinions, beliefs and associations, the allegorical interpretation of Maimonides was a revelation—a revelation bringing harmony to their minds and peace to their souls.

* * *

Mi-Moshe we-'ad Moshe lo kom ke-Moshe—"From Moses till Moses there was none like Moses." Just as Moshe ben Amram so did Moshe ben Maimon extend his gigantic and beneficent activity to all classes of his people. The blessings of his work poured down on the vast plains and the lonely summits. The loftiest thinker looked up to Maimonides with the same gratitude and reverence as the simplest man of the mass. For this alone Maimonides deserves immortality—

Denn wer den Besten seiner Zeit genug getan,
Der hat gelebt fuer alle Zeiten.

[1] *Moreh* i, 71.

But man is selfish. He measures the grandest phenomena of the past by the petty yardstick of the present. It is but in accordance with human nature that we finally ask, what is Maimonides to our own generation? The reply sounds sad in the extreme. The life work of Maimonides seems to be lost. Maimonides, the Halakist, intended to supersede Talmudic literature by his more efficient works, the Commentary on the Mishnah and his *Mishne Torah*. The first part has been successfully achieved without the co-operation of Maimonides. The modern Jew knows nothing of the Talmud, but its substitutes are hardly better known. And even in the countries where the Talmud is still a power in life, the Halakic activity of Maimonides has brought forth the reverse of what it had aimed at. Maimonides intended to set aside by his works all preceding discussions which were fruitless, though brilliant. But he accomplished the very opposite: his books have called forth a new enormous literature of mental equilibristics which would probably have thrown him into despair.

As for the philosopher Maimonides, need I point out that the downfall of Aristotle involves the downfall of Maimonides? The stars of modern astronomy have grown infinitely in size, but the spectral analysis has torn their souls out of them. The death of the stars has caused the death of the Separate Intelligences and of the Active Intellect which connects the mind of man with God. Thus the tremendous edifice of Maimonidian thought seems but one magnificent ruin.

Yet, have you ever heard of the temple of the Sun-god in Palmyra? This temple was the greatest

building of its time, and even in its ruins it is so enormous that one of its corners has afforded room for a little settlement to establish itself. In the ruins of Maimonides' edifice there are many corners which might grant shelter and rest to the "Perplexed" of our age. I am firmly convinced that a thorough study of Maimonides' writings would reveal an abundance of thought which, after some transformation and adaptation, might become of great value even for our own modern times.

But far more than in its individual phases Maimonides' activity as a whole may serve us as a lesson of primary importance. The problem that faced Maimonides—the reconciliation of Judaism with non-Jewish culture—renews itself with every generation, and never more persistently than today when the visible barriers between the Jews and the non-Jewish environment have been raised. The example of Maimonides teaches us that Judaism has nothing to fear from other cultures. The ideas of the twentieth century are not more opposed to the Judaism of today than the Aristotelian conceptions were to the Judaism of the twelfth century. Still they were accepted and absorbed by the doctrine of Judaism.

The example of Maimonides shows us, moreover, the means by which this adaptation might be accomplished. A real, a lasting, synthesis between modern culture and Judaism can be brought about only by one who is intimately familiar with the content of Judaism. Philo of Alexandria, twelve centuries before Maimonides, had undertaken the same task, and had tried to solve it by precisely the same

means,—by allegorical interpretation. Still, as far as the Jewish people are concerned, he utterly failed: his influence can only be traced in the doctrine of the Church, while Maimonides is revered by the Jews as a teacher and a saint. Maimonides mastered all the branches of Jewish knowledge and was intimately associated with all the phases of Jewish life, whereas Philo was a stranger in the field of Judaism, and could not even read the Bible in the original.

The reconciliation of Judaism with non-Jewish culture may be compared to a surgical operation. But an operation requires a most intimate knowledge of anatomy. It cannot be performed by a quack, who would let his patient bleed to death.

Moreover, the operating surgeon must enjoy the complete confidence of the patient. He must endeavor to strengthen the patient's heart and raise his spirits to enable him to stand the operation with as little injury as possible. Let us, therefore, follow the example of the man whose seven hundredth anniversary we are celebrating to-night. Let us first make our people know Judaism, let us make them love Judaism—and with a clear mind and a strong heart the Jewish nation can confidently await the future.

XI

MAIMONIDES AS AN EXEGETE*

THE title of this lecture, which has been chosen in conformity with those of the preceding lectures on "Types of Rabbinical Exegesis," conveys but inadequately the nature and significance of the task that confronts us today. In modern times biblical exegesis has become a special department of learning, which has its official representatives at almost every college and university. To speak of a man as an exegete is nowadays no more than to speak of a man as a mathematician or an archeologist, that is, to touch only the circumference of a man's personality. But in olden times, when the Bible was *the* Bible, *the* Book, regulating the spiritual and practical life of mankind—was, in fact, more than a book, was Life itself,—in olden times to speak of a man as an exegete was to penetrate into the very centre of his personality, to reveal the spring from which both his ideas and actions drew their origin. Therefore, when we speak of Maimonides as an exegete, it is not the same, as were we to speak of Maimonides as a rabbinical authority, as an astronomer, as a physician, or even as a philosopher. To speak of Maimonides

*Lecture delivered at the Summer Meeting of the University Extension Movement at Cambridge (England), in a series of lectures on "Types of Rabbinical Exegesis," on August 14, 1906. Published first in the *Jewish Literary Annual*, London, 1907.

as an exegete is to indicate the cornerstone which bears the gigantic edifice of his system of thought.

This circumstance becomes the more remarkable, when we bear in mind two facts which seemingly contradict each other. Maimonides, whom I have to present to you as an exegete, never wrote a commentary on a biblical book. The assumption that he composed a commentary on the Five Books of Moses is false and based on a misunderstanding. In fact, he incidentally speaks with thinly veiled contempt of the "hapless commentators who look upon the explanation of words as the consummation of wisdom" (*Moreh* ii, 29). And yet the same Maimonides regards his ripest and greatest work, "the Guide of the Perplexed," as a primarily exegetical achievement. In a passage of his "Guide" he expressly declares that the object of this book is not philosophy, but exegesis.

This contradiction disappears, however, when we consider Maimonides' general conception of the Bible. For, radically different as Maimonides may have been from a man, let us say, like Rashi—the difference between a consummate rationalist and an unsophisticated believer—to Maimonides as well as to Rashi the Divine origin of Scripture was an axiom which needed no demonstration. It may appear strange that a man like Maimonides, who was perhaps the most analytical mind of the Middle Ages, who considered it necessary to prove elaborately the existence of God, who interpreted prophecy as a psychological phenomenon, who held the most advanced views on the immortality of the soul, should never have entertained any doubt regarding the Divine authority of the Bible. There have been people who have ques-

tioned Maimonides' sincerity on this point. But those who cast the shadow of an aspersion on Maimonides as a personality merely prove that they have utterly failed to understand him, for it is one of the most outstanding and most attractive features of Maimonides that his character is in no way inferior to his intellect. To be sure, this credulity may appear strange—but it only does so when modern standards are applied to phenomena of the past. However strange it may seem, it is yet a fact, which no student of history can deny, that the authority of the Bible was never questioned during the Middle Ages, in spite of the many skeptical minds which that age produced. Even Hivi ha-Balkhi, practically the only medieval Bible critic whose objections have come down to us, seems merely to have endeavored to rationalize the statements of the Bible, but he does not appear to have doubted the truth of those statements themselves. On the other hand, when we read the Kusari, the philosophical standard work of Judah Halevi, who was as great a thinker as he was a poet, we find that the heathen king of the Khazars, in spite of his skeptical turn of mind, is converted to Judaism and becomes fully convinced of its truth, when he is told by the Jewish sage that the religion of Judaism, according to the Biblical account, was revealed before a multitude of six hundred thousand people. To doubt this account itself never occurred to the King of the Khazars, any more than it did to the whole of the Middle Ages.

As for Maimonides himself, the strongest possible emphasis is laid by him on this point. He counts the belief in the Divine origin of the Bible among the fund-

amental Articles of Faith which, as is known, he was the first to lay down, and he formulates it in a manner which leaves no doubt whatsoever as to his innermost conviction.

> The Eighth Article of Faith—quoth Maimonides[1]—is the belief that the whole of the Pentateuch which is now in our hands was revealed to us through Moses, that it is in its totality the word of God, and that Moses only acted as a copyist to whom it was dictated. . . . There is no difference between the verse "and the sons of Ham are Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan" (Gen. x. 6), or the verse "and the name of his wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred" (Gen. xxxvi, 39), and the verses "I am the Lord Thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," and "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One"—every portion of it is the word of God, and the whole of it is the Law of the Lord, perfect, pure, sacred and true.

To be sure, Maimonides refers only to the Pentateuch. The other parts of the Bible, the Prophets, and still more so, the Hagiographa, cannot claim the same degree of sanctity as the Torah. But even these sections of the Bible are the product, though to a less immediate degree, of the spirit of the Lord.

The logical outcome of this conception is the conviction that the Bible is *not* a literary monument. It has often been said that Maimonides had no eye for the literary beauties of the biblical style. But this is a gross injustice to a man who himself was one of the greatest stylists that the Jews have ever produced. Maimonides surely understood, and often himself pointed out, the literary perfection of the Bible; but

[1] See his Mishnah Commentary, Tractate Sanhedrin, Introduction to *Perek Helek*.

he would have been unfaithful to his own convictions, had he placed the Author of the Universe on the same plane with an author of books. To be sure, the Bible exhibits literary beauty, but its intrinsic value, its inner essence can not be beauty but truth, philosophical truth, which was the highest form of truth both to him and to the whole age in which he lived.

From what has preceded it follows that the *content* of the Bible must necessarily be philosophical. At the same time Maimonides could not possibly deny that, as far as the *form* of the Bible was concerned, it was *not* philosophical. Maimonides was intimately acquainted with philosophical literature, and he knew that the style in which that literature was couched was radically different. The Organon of Aristotle bears its philosophical imprint on the surface. Why, then, did the Bible choose a form which is so ambiguous that the content is almost unrecognizable? According to Maimonides, the reason for this strange phenomenon must be looked for in the nature and purpose of the Torah. *Torah* means "guidance"; it is "a book of guidance for the first and the last." The Torah does not address itself to a limited class of people with special intellectual requirements, but to the whole of Israel, nay, to the whole of mankind. When Moses felt his death approaching, he called Joshua and said to him: "Gather the people together, men, women and children, and the stranger that is in thy gate, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe all the words of the Law" (Deut. xxxi, 12). Had the Bible been clothed in a philosophical garb, it would not have been under-

stood, or, what is much worse, it would have been misunderstood. Its object would in no way have been achieved; on the contrary, the very reverse would have been accomplished. To use Maimonides' well-known simile: wine and meat are in themselves excellent articles of food, but, if given to a suckling, they would destroy his constitution. The Bible is therefore compelled to present philosophical truths in popular unphilosophical form. It appeals to the most intellectual and at the same time to the most unsophisticated reader.[1]

The outcome of this conception is Maimonides' belief in the double sense of the Bible: an inner and an outer sense. The former is for the thinkers and philosophers, the latter for the people at large. To use Maimonides' own phraseology: the inner sense is for the *yehidim*, "the few," who are only to be found "one out of a city and two out of a tribe"; the outer sense is for the *hamon*, the *hoi polloi*, the "many." The Bible is thus made to appear as a kind of palimpsest in which the outer writing can be easily discerned by every one who is able to read, whilst the inner writing can only be recognized by the practiced eye of the scholar. Maimonides himself, in the introduction to the *Moreh*, illustrates his view of the double sense of Scripture by a most happy and striking simile which he professes to find in a verse of the book of Proverbs (xxv. 11): "a word fitly spoken is like golden apples in a network of silver." Having elaborately proved that the word *maskiyoth*, which occurs in this verse, neither means "pictures" (as the English Version has it),

[1] Compare above p. 187 *et seq.*

nor "vessels," as other commentators suggest, but, as still other Jewish exegetes had already proposed, "net-work," he proceeds:

> See, how beautifully this verse describes the conditions of a good form of expression! It shows that in a biblical passage which conveys a double sense the plain meaning must appear as beautiful as silver, while the hidden meaning must be even more beautiful, and bear the same relation to it as gold to silver. It is further necessary that the plain sense shall give the reader at least a hint as to the purport of the hidden meaning. Just as a golden apple overlaid with a net work of silver, when seen at a distance or looked at superficially, is mistaken for a silver apple; but when a keen-sighted person looks at the object he will find what is within, and see that the apple is made of gold, so it is with the expressions of the Bible. Their outer meaning is suggestive of wisdom, useful in many directions. . . . Their inner meaning, however, contains wisdom leading to the profoundest religious beliefs in their very essence.

Up to this point Maimonides is still fair. The outer meaning, though not as valuable as the inner meaning, still retains a value of its own. But this is scarcely his innermost conviction. His real attitude toward the outer meaning of the Bible is casually betrayed in a passage of his *Moreh* (ii, 10). After explaining the inner sense of the "ladder" in Jacob's dream, in which he discovers profound metaphycical truths, he suddenly breaks forth into the following diatribe:

> It is in such wise that those who wish to understand the dark sayings of the Prophets should try to understand them. Only then will they awake from the sleep of thoughtlessness, be rescued from the sea of ignorance, and rise upwards to the world of higher beings. But those who are content to swim in the waters of their ignorance and sink to the very

> bottom, need not exert themselves either in mind or in body. All they have to do is to stop moving, and they will be certain to go down by the law of nature.

After this confession we begin to grasp the seeming contradiction of which we spoke above. Maimonides declines to be an exegete of the outer meaning of the Bible, but he regards it as the highest achievement to be an exegete of the inner meaning of Scripture. He does not consider it worth while merely to tap the surface of the Bible, but it is the consummation of his life's work to be, in the words of Goethe, the man,

> *Der, frei von jedem Schein,*
> *Nur in der Wesen Tiefe trachtet.*

Thus Maimonides became the *philosophical* interpreter of the Bible. His interpretations, however, are not in the nature of a running commentary on the Sacred Writings. Maimonides does not enter the treasure-chamber of the Bible with a penny candle to grope about in darkness, and incidentally to fall on a gem or a piece of gold. He stands on a high platform, and from there directs a most powerful searchlight upon the sacred book, thus illumining the darkness and enabling *others* to seek.

In accordance with this conception, Maimonides lays down the principle that every genealogy and narrative of the Bible has, of necessity, a hidden philosophical meaning. Commenting on a well-known passage in the Talmud, he declares that King Menasseh was regarded by the Jews as particularly godless, because he believed and preached that the

biblical stories and genealogies did not possess any inner significance and were to be taken literally. I have tried before to defend Maimonides' literary sense. But it must be candidly admitted that he was completely devoid of the historical sense—a defect which he shared with his entire age. He cannot conceive, for instance, that the genealogical table of the descendants of Noah has a value in itself, in fact, is one of the most valuable documents of antiquity, and he is therefore on the lookout for philosophical reasons to justify its place in the Bible. In the same fashion Maimonides interprets a number of biblical narratives, thus providing a key for the understanding of the rest.

From this conception of the nature of the Bible it also follows that the ceremonial law must ultimately rest upon philosophical foundations. A large portion of the third volume of his "Guide," known under the name of *Ta'ame ha-mitzwoth*, "the Reasons for the Ceremonies," which is derived from its subject-matter, is devoted to this task, and it is here that Maimonides' genius, combined with an unparalleled mastery of Jewish tradition, celebrates its greatest triumphs.

I will quote only one example of Maimonides' method of interpreting the Scriptures, following the practice of Maimonides, who always confines himself to a few illustrations, leaving the rest to the reader.

Every student of the Bible knows that in innumerable instances God is described as the author of the most trivial things in life. In some cases this authorship of God presents great theological difficulties. Thus in I Kings xvii, 9, God says to Elijah, "Behold,

I have commanded thee a widow to nourish thee;" in other words, God is made to speak to a heathen woman. Still worse is the case in II Sam. xvi, 10. David, while fleeing from Absalom, is publicly cursed by Shimei, the son of Gera. David's adjutant is ready to punish the offender on the spot. But David replies: "Surely, the Lord hath said unto him: Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so"? God is thus designated as the author of an action which was, to say the least, unjust. In Jonah ii, 11 ("And God said unto the whale, and he spat out Jonah"), God is even made to speak to an animal. Modern Semitists are acquainted with this form of narrative from the Mesha inscription, in which the King of Moab attributes all his actions to his god Kemosh. Maimonides did not know the Mesha inscription, which was discovered in the nineteenth century. But his genius revealed the truth. He lays down the rule that the prophets often omit the intermediate causes, and mention only the first cause. Just as we attribute actions to the king which do not proceed from him directly, for which, however, he is ultimately responsible, so also do we designate God as the author of many things, which are not His direct work, but go back to Him as the final cause. Innumerable difficulties disappear after this explanation.

However, had Maimonides done nothing else than to prove the double sense of the Bible, he would have done nothing that was new. For since the time that the Torah was given to the world, it was the Torah

alone which insisted on its plain meaning. "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it or do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it or do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart that thou mayest do it" (Deut. xxx, 11-19). All subsequent Jewish authorities, and oral Jewish tradition, above all, insist on *Drash*, on the explanation of the inner sense of the Bible. The characteristic achievement of Maimonides, therefore, was not that he proved the inner sense of the Bible in itself, but that he proved a *special* inner sense, an inner sense which reveals contents derived from an extraneous source—derived, in short, from Aristotle. Maimonides not only discovers deep truths beneath the biblical surface; he discovers specific Aristotelian truths.

For Maimonides believed in Aristotle well-nigh as firmly as he believed in the Bible. In our age of democracy and equal suffrage, when hero-worship is as scarce as heroes, we cannot possibly form an adequate conception of the reverence which Aristotle enjoyed during that highly civilized age. To the whole Jewish-Arabic period Aristotle was *the* Philosopher. In the generation preceding Maimonides the Jewish thinker Abraham ibn Daud of Toledo, who died as a martyr in 1180, declared Aristotle the highest authority, in whose light the Scriptures had

to be examined. As for Maimonides, he frequently goes out of his way to voice his boundless admiration for the thinker of Stagira. On one occasion he proclaims Aristotle to be "the final stage which has ever been attained or will ever be attained by the human intellect." On another occasion he affirms that whatever Aristotle had said about the physical world must be accepted as irrefutable truth. Aristotle is true. The Torah is true. *Ergo* Aristotle and the Torah are identical. The Torah is the divine anticipation of the human discoveries of Aristotle.

This identity is established—and can only be established—by means of allegorical interpretation. Allegorical interpretation is defined by Maimonides as the proper understanding of the metaphors and similes used by the Prophets. In the introduction to his "Guide," Maimonides declares by way of premise that "the key to the understanding and the full comprehension of all the words of the Prophets is the knowledge of the similes and their contents, and the proper explanation of the prophetic expressions." This explanation Maimonides designates as one of the chief purposes of his "Guide."

Overlooking Maimonides' endeavors in this direction, we have no difficulty in acknowledging that he himself is the most ingenious representative of allegorical interpretation. True, attempts in that domain had been made before Maimonides, not only, in the traditional form of *Drash*, on the part of the Rabbis, but also, in a more philosophical direction, by Saadia Gaon, and others. Yet they were only attempts. It is also true that twelve hundred years before Mai-

monides there existed in Alexandria a full-fledged school of Allegorical Interpretation. The chief works of Philo, the highest representative of Alexandrian culture, are devoted to this form of biblical exegesis. But Maimonides scarcely knew of the existence of his Alexandrian predecessors, and there are, moreover, essential differences between him and the Alexandrians,—differences which arise mainly from their different mental equipment. Whether Philo was able to read Hebrew or not, may be open to doubt, but that he was not a Jewish scholar is certain. Ignorance may often be bliss, but in this province it is bound to prove a curse. Allegorical interpretation which is not held in check by an exact knowledge of the biblical text resembles a balloon without ballast. It rises rapidly and soon loses itself in the clouds. It has no trouble in starting, but has the greatest difficulty in coming down. Maimonides, on the other hand, was one of the greatest Jewish scholars that ever lived; he knew the subject of his interpretation in its minutest details, and was constantly guided and controlled by the biblical text. With the Alexandrians allegorical interpretation was a play of imagination; with Maimonides it was the work of science.

In dealing with the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, Maimonides proceeds in the systematic manner which is characteristic of this greatest systematic genius of the Jewish nation. Before attacking his subject of inquiry, he first seeks to lay down its foundations, and he does so by proving that the use of figurative speech in the Bible is not accidental, but lies in the very nature of Scripture.

Prophecy, according to Maimonides, is a psychological process, which operates primarily by means of the imaginative faculty of man. Consequently its medium of expression consists in that form of speech which is born of the imagination, and therefore appeals to the imagination,—in figurative speech, or in similes. The Bible itself unmistakably points to this underlying connection between prophecy and similes. Hosea (xii, 10) is told by the Lord: "I have spoken in *similes* by the prophets." Ezekiel receives the divine injunction (xvii, 2): "Son of man, put forth a *simile* and speak a *parable*!", and the wise King Solomon thus defines the object of his book (Proverbs i, 6): "To understand a *simile* and *figurative speech*, the words of the wise and their dark sayings." We should be astonished, were the Bible *not* to speak in allegories. Maimonides is so firmly convinced of the appropriateness of this form of expression in the case of the Bible, that on one occasion (*Moreh* ii, 25) he boldly declares that, had the eternity of the world, as taught by Aristotle, been philosophically demonstrated, he would not have hesitated to explain the contradictory biblical passages in a figurative sense, "for the gates of allegorical interpretation are not closed." It is remarkable, however, that, in spite of these premises, Maimonides remains at all times moderate and sober. His interpretations are always in harmony with Hebrew grammar and lexicography.

A few examples will serve to illustrate his method of allegorical interpretation.

One of the principal elements of Aristotelian philosophy, or, more correctly, of the Arabic modification

of Aristotelian philosophy, is the doctrine of Separate Intelligences. According to Aristotle, the world consists of Matter and Form, or, as we should say in modern times, of Matter and Mind. Matter is inferior, the source of all defects. Form is divine, the source of all perfection. The lower world, or, as Aristotle styles it, the sublunar world, presents in all its phenomena a mixture of both. Matter is subject to destruction, and only Mind survives. But the upper world, the world of spheres, is made up of beings which are free from bodily matter. They are Separate Intelligences, which have no body, and are consequently immortal. These Intelligences are attached to the spheres and form, as it were, their souls. They move the spheres, and through the instrumentality of the latter they set in motion all things in the sublunar world, thus acting as intermediaries between God, the First Cause, and the lower world beneath the moon.

We all know what the "angels" are, and we often admire their winged figures in works of art. But to Maimonides, as already to his predecessor, Abraham Ibn Daud, it was a self-evident truth that the *Mal'akhim*, or "angels," of the Bible are identical with the Separate Intelligences of Aristotelian philosophy.

> We have already explained in a previous chapter of this book—Maimonides remarks in his *Moreh* (ii, 6)—that the angels are not corporeal. This is exactly what Aristotle says. There is only a difference in name: Aristotle speaks of Separate Intelligences, while we speak of *Mal'akhim*, or Angels.

The Greek *Angelos*, the prototype of the English word, means, like the Hebrew *Mal'akh*, "a Messenger,"

because the angels, as indicated above, act as God's messengers in the sublunar world. It is therefore natural that they are described in the prophetic writings in a manner which conveys the same idea. Since the conception of incorporeal beings is inaccessible to the average mind, the angels are represented in the Bible as having bodily form. And since the Bible, in an endeavor to bring God nearer to the human understanding, frequently applies to the Deity the attributes of man, it pictures the angels, in order to accentuate their subordinate position to the Godhead, in the shape of animals. Constituting the moving forces in the process of the world, the angels are described as being endowed with movement, with the most perfect form of movement, for which even man yearns in vain—with flying. Since flying is inconceivable without wings, the angels are consistently represented as winged animals. Thus the healthy hue of the celestial beings of the Bible is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Aristotelian abstractions.

Another example may serve as a further illustration.

We have seen previously that the world, according to Aristotle, consists of Matter and Form, or Matter and Mind. All evil originates in Matter, in the sensual nature of man; all perfection emanates from Form, or Mind. Since Matter is passive, being shaped by Form, Plato already had designated Matter as "Woman." The same figurative meaning, according to Maimonides, is attached to the word *Isha*, the Hebrew word for "woman," in the Bible. Many a passage receives through this interpretation a new and fascinating significance. When the wise king

praises the *Esheth hayil*, "the virtuous woman," who is "the crown of her husband," he only refers to a willing matter, to a physical disposition which is so constituted that it readily yields to Form, is cheerfully governed by Mind. When the same royal author in a famous passage (Proverbs vii.) warns us against "the faithless woman, the strange woman which flattereth with her words," and endeavors to catch in her net the inexperienced youth, he actually means Matter, the seductive sensual nature of man; and thus the immortal speech against the Smart Set of three thousand years ago is turned into a philosophical exposition in the Aristotelian spirit.

The consummation of Maimonides' allegorical interpretation will be found, however, in his adaptation of the biblical text to the Aristotelian system of Physics and Metaphysics. For the physical, and still more so the metaphysical, doctrines of Aristotle are the crown of the edifice of Aristotelian thought. Consequently, they cannot be missing in the Divine manual of philosophy. Maimonides is firmly convinced that the first chapters of Genesis contain a system of Physics, and the first chapter of Ezekiel—the vision of the Divine Chariot—a system of metaphysics which are practically identical with the teachings of Aristotle. It may be a problem how far the first chapters in Genesis can be reconciled with the results of Science; but this much is certain, that they do *not* teach Aristotle. The actual meaning and background of the visions of Ezekiel may be a matter of dispute, but there is no doubt that Ezekiel knew as much of Aristotle—as Aristotle of Ezekiel. Yet

the genius of Maimonides makes the impossible possible. He brings into harmony two hostile worlds. He casts a bridge over the ocean that separates Hellas from Judea. The allegorical net is laid so skilfully that we have to mobilize all our inborn skepticism in order to escape it. For however fantastic his task, his method is sound and sober.

I will indicate, in as few words as possible, the salient points of his interpretation. In doing this, I am conscious of acting against the will of Maimonides, who repeatedly warns us against the public presentation of what he considers "the Mysteries of the Law." But I hope that the spirit of Maimonides will forgive me if, in order to characterize his genius, I have to disobey his wishes.

In the biblical account of Creation we read (Gen. i, 2): "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the breath (*ru'ah*) of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters." In this verse four elements, the existence of which is assumed in the Aristotelian system of physics, are clearly indicated. "Earth" and "Water" are mentioned expressly. The "breath of the Lord" (as Maimonides, with considerable philological justification, translates instead of "Spirit") can easily enough be explained as Air. But what about Fire? An allusion to Fire, according to Maimonides, is contained in the word "darkness," for the Elementary Fire, as Avicenna, and to some extent Aristotle himself, taught, is colorless, since otherwise the atmosphere would be all aglow at night. The Bible itself repeatedly points to the "dark" nature of Fire, by

using "Darkness" as a synonym of "Fire." In Deuteronomy iv, 36, in the account of the Revelation, we read: "And thou heardst his words out of the *fire*.". A little later (v. 20), however, the same idea is expressed in the words: "When ye heard the voice out of the *darkness*," while in Job (xx, 26) we read in one and the same verse: "All *darkness* shall be hid in his secret places; a *fire* not blown shall consume him."

Ezekiel's vision contains Aristotle's system of metaphysics. In its centre stands the theory of the spheres. The spheres, according to Aristotle, are superior, almost Divine beings, which are endowed with the most perfect form of movement, the circular movement. Through this movement the elements of the sublunar world, which originally were separated, are set in motion, and the incessant change in their mixture, caused by the movement of the spheres, constitutes the process of the world. All this is intelligibly enough indicated in Ezekiel. The four "living creatures" in the Chariot personify the four principal spheres: the spheres of the moon, the sun, the planets and the fixed stars. The circular nature of their movement is pointed out unmistakably in the frequently repeated phrase: "They turned not when they went." The complete dependence of the Elements on the Spheres is stated in verse 15: "Behold, one *Ofan* (Element) was upon the earth by the living creatures;" still more explicitly in verse 19: "When the living creatures went, the *Ofanim* went by them," and in verse 21: "When those went these went, and when those stood these stood . . . for the spirit of the living creatures (the Spheres) was in

the *Ofanim*." In the same vein Maimonides treats the whole chapter, presenting an unbroken chain of ingenious observations and *apercus*.

I have said before that Maimonides' exegesis rests on an elaborate understanding of the biblical text. His allegorical interpretation is solidly constructed on philological interpretation. By philological interpretation Maimonides chiefly understands the elucidation of the development of the meaning of a word. This task had already been recognized and pursued by his predecessor and countryman Abu'l-Walid ibn Janah, and is still zealously pursued by modern philology, which endeavors to show how the originally rude and concrete meaning of a word gradually assumes a subtle and spiritual connotation. Maimonides uses this study of lexicography as a means whereby he hopes to attain one of the most important philosophical ends. From the time of the Decalogue, which forbids the Jews to ascribe to God any bodily likeness, down to our own days of abstract thinking, Judaism has insisted on a spiritual conception of the Godhead. The masses, however, not being able to grasp so lofty a conception, have adopted less spiritual and more concrete ideas, while Jewish scholars have been gradually reconciled to this imperfection of the masses as a necessary evil. But to Maimonides, as to any other follower of the Aristotelian philosophy, to whom the essence of God consists of pure mind, free from the defects of matter, a corporeal conception of God is equivalent to the negation of God. Maimonides consequently makes the greatest efforts to eradicate these corporeal notions of the Deity. He protests with utmost vigor

against these notions in all his writings, whether they be scholarly or popular, and he formulates this protest as a religious dogma at the head of his Articles of Faith.

At the same time Maimonides cannot deny, nor does he attempt to deny, that the Bible often applies corporeal and anthropomorphic expressions to the Deity. This difficulty appeared to Maimonides, as well as to his contemporaries, so momentous and perplexing that his philosophical standard work begins directly with the elucidation of this problem. In fact, he expressly designates the interpretation of these anthropomorphic expressions as one of the chief aims of his book. He enumerates over forty such terms, showing that, in accordance with the general development of language, they have gradually assumed a spiritual connotation. I will quote only two of these terms—*panim*, "face," and *ahor*, "back," the latter being probably the most objectionable of these anthropomorphisms—in order to illustrate Maimonides' way of procedure. *Panim* has three meanings developed out of one another: (1) "face," (2) "before" (in a local sense), (3) "presence, existence." *Ahor* again designates: (1) "back," (2) "after" (temporal), (3) "traces, consequences." It is in these latter meanings that these terms must be interpreted when applied to the Deity. When we read in Exodus xxxiii, 23, God's reply to Moses: "Thou shalt see my back, but my face cannot be seen," we are utterly perplexed to find such strikingly corporeal terms applied to God. But when we assign to the words in question the spiritual meaning which was proved to inhere in them, we take this verse to

mean: "Thou shalt see my traces, my activity, but my face, my real existence, cannot be seen," and there is suddenly revealed the deep philosophical truth that God can only be conceived through His works, but not in His essence.

We have thus traced the four main ends, which Maimonides avowedly set before himself in his philosophical lifework: (1) to explain the corporeal, anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible in their spiritual sense; (2) to interpret the similes of the prophets in their allegorical significance; (3) to elucidate the true meaning of the account of Creation as a system of Physics, and (4) to expound the vision of Ezekiel as a system of Metaphysics.

Maimonides' exegesis proved so successful—so much more successful than that of the Alexandrian philosophers—because it rested on a solid basis. Maimonides was not an amateur, but a scholar, and what he built was not a castle in the air but a structure of bricks and mortar. I will briefly indicate the building material employed by Maimonides for his exegesis. It certainly was not as varied as ours. He knew nothing, to mention only a single point, of the Septuagint. But the material at his disposal is turned by him to most excellent advantage. He makes frequent use of the Targum, especially the Targum of the Pentateuch, erroneously attributed to Onkelos (Aquilas), for whom he shows the highest regard. He treats his version almost in the same critical manner in which modern scholars are wont to treat the ancient versions of the Bible. He collates a number of manuscripts, and sometimes he gives us various readings of one passage. He also makes extensive use of his

predecessors. Maimonides lived at the height of a period whose achievements in the field of Biblical science have not yet been surpassed. He did not know Rashi, but he knew and utilized the grammatical works of Hayyuj and Abu'l-Walid, and the exegetical works of Saadia Gaon, Moses ibn Gicatilla, Judah Ibn Bal'am and Abraham Ibn Ezra. His work resembles the ladder in the vision of Jacob, to which he assigns such a deep philosophical meaning. The ladder stood on the ground, but its top reached to heaven: Maimonides' exegesis loses itself in the heights of Metaphysics, but it is solidly rooted in the soil of science and philology.

The question as to his predecessors leads us to the last point: to the consideration of the effects of his work.

It would certainly be wrong to judge Maimonides by his imitators It cannot be denied that some of those who followed him, having neither the knowledge nor the genius of their master, grossly overdid his allegorical method. But were great men to be judged by those who caricatured them, they would frequently stand forth as the most objectionable specimens of mankind. Maimonides' beneficial influence on Judaism can scarcely be overestimated. He endeavored to become, and he actually did become, a "Guide of the Perplexed." When in the letters addressed to him, of which we have so many specimens in the Geniza fragments treasured in the library of Cambridge University, he is styled *Or'enenu*, "Light of our Eyes," it is not mere oriental exaggeration, but literal truth. We are all acquainted with the terrible struggle which broke out soon after Maimonides'

death. Maimonides emerged successfully from this struggle. He achieved his end. He made his method of allegorical interpretation a "Type of Rabbinical Exegesis." Before him, and even in his own writings, we meet on the one side the philosopher and, on the other side, the rabbinical student, facing each other in a most threatening attitude. Through the efforts of Maimonides and his popularizer, David Kimchi, there gradually came into existence the harmonized type of the rabbinical philosopher and the philosophical rabbi. This combination proved most fruitful and vivifying for Judaism. True, Maimonides' philosophy is no longer valid,—any more than is that of Aristotle. People whose intellectual vision is limited by the narrow horizon of the present may boast of superiority, and act like children who, standing on the shoulders of adults, shout that they are taller. But he who is able "to remember the days of yore, to understand the years of past generations" will look at the work of Maimonides with reverence and humility. He will be animated by the same feeling of awe which strikes the dweller in a modern apartment house, "with the latest improvements," at the sight of the overwhelming ruins of Ancient Rome. Maimonides has been called the Jewish Aristotle. This is by no means an exaggerated compliment. Maimonides resembles Aristotle not only in his way of thinking, but also in his influence on posterity. Aristotle's philosophy is dead, but its spirit pervades and animates modern thought. The elements of Maimonides philosophy are antiquated, but the spirit of Maimonides is still alive, and will remain alive for ever.

XII

MAIMONIDES AS A MASTER OF STYLE*

IF the French dictum *le style c'est l'homme* be true then we are entitled to expect a characteristic style of so characteristic a personality as Maimonides. This expectation is, indeed, fully borne out by the facts. An analysis of Maimonides' literary activity from this specific angle abundantly justifies the contention that Maimonides is not only one of the profoundest thinkers of the Jewish people but also one of its most brilliant writers, one of those masters of the pen who understand the rare art of combining depth of thought with beauty of form.

Maimonides himself lays considerable emphasis upon the external form in which ideas are conveyed to the human mind, and therefore attaches extraordinary significance to the vocation of an author.

> You must know—Maimonides writes in one of his letters[1] —that he who undertakes to speak or preach in public is in duty bound to rehearse what he is about to say at least four times and thus fix it firmly in his mind. But he who wishes to put down something in writing and perpetute it in a book is obliged to examine it a thousand times if he can manage to do so.

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*Published originally in German in a collection of essays bearing on the life and work of Maimonides, which appeared under the title *Moses ben Maimon* (volume i, Leipsic, 1908, pp. 429-438).

[1] *Kobetz teshuboth ha-Rambam*, ed. Lichtenberg, vol. ii, p. 12a.

At the same time if we do not wish to misconceive entirely the nature of Maimonides' style and his attitude towards it we must bear in mind that the style *per se* is of no value whatsoever in the eyes of Maimonides. This particular view upon the literary form of expression is the natural outgrowth of Maimonides' bent of mind which is strictly teleological, I might say, idealistically utilitraian, insofar as Maimonides is inclined to look at all phenomena of life from the point of view of expediency—though this expediency be of an ideal nature—and to conceive of the entire process of the universe as well as of human existence as a mere stepping stone to the one great purpose,—the contemplation of God. It is blasphemous, in the opinion of Maimonides, to ascribe any action to God which is not directed towards a well-defined goal,[1] and in like manner every action in human life which does not ultimately lead to this lofty end—the contemplation of God—must be pronounced immoral.[2] A concept like Kant's "disinterested contemplation," the importance of which is found in the very aimlessness of the contemplated object, is entirely alien to Maimonides' way of thinking. Maimonides is strongly prejudiced against poetry, for the reason that poetry is in its very essence aesthetic and not ethical, *i. e.*, not teleological,—a prejudice, by the way, which exercised a vast influence upon his whole system of thought, for it placed him under the necessity of transforming the biblical poetry into a biblical philosophy.

[1] *Moreh* iii, 25.

[2] *Eight Chapters*, Ch. 5.

Looked at from this point of view, the style *as such* can lay no claim to any merit of its own, but must rather confine itself to serving as a means to an end, an end which can be no other than the faithful reproduction of human ideas. Judged by these standards, the first requirement of style cannot be beauty, but *lucidity*. Lucidity is, indeed, the most striking feature of Maimonides' style. This feature is reflected not only in Maimonides' form of expression but also in the entire construction of his literary works which makes Maimonides stand out as the greatest systematic mind in Judaism.

Now to the systematic mind, whose main art consists in focusing attention upon the principal point and to consider the less essential points only insofar as they help to throw light upon the principal point,[4] lucidity is inseparable from *brevity*. Maimonides takes frequent occasion, with the proud humility so characteristic of his personality, to claim special credit for this stylistic merit of his writings:

> All our works are carefully sifted and cleansed. It is never our intention to swell the volume of our writings or to waste our time in useless discussions. When we have to explain a topic we only explain that which is absolutely in need of explanation, and explain it only so far as it is necessary to bring the idea nearer to the understanding. Outside of this we usually confine ourselves in our writings to a brief exposition of the subject.
>
> You who study my writings know full well that I am always at pains to avoid all discussions and polemics.

[4] In his introduction to the *Moreh* Maimonides, in enumerating the various methods resorted to by writers, mentions also the disregard of detail with a view to simplifying a difficult subject.

> Nay, were it possible for me to summarize the whole of the Talmud in one sentence I would not try to extend it over two sentences.[1]

Maimonides frequently appeals to his readers not to treat his works as if they were ordinary reading matter, "which one is prone to glance through in the interludes between the pleasures of wine-drinking and love-making,"[2] but to peruse them repeatedly and with concentrated attention:

> Read my works time and again and ponder over them intensively. Should your fancy lead you to believe that you have grasped their meaning after reading them for the first or even for the tenth time, then, by God, it has misled you into entertaining an entirely wrong idea. In reading them (my books) you must not proceed in a hurry. I did not put them in writing in a haphazard fashion but after much thinking and weighing.[3]

The clearness so characteristic of Maimonides' style is not in the least impaired by the great length of the sentences in which Maimonides, in his striving for utmost brevity, is frequently prone to indulge. For his sentences are built with such consummate skill and such clear-cut logic that, in spite of their excessive length, they are wonderfully lucid. A brilliant specimen of this remarkable art to unloosen the most complicated tangles of thought and lay them asunder into their separate threads will be found in the last chapters of the first volume of the Moreh, in which Maimonides analyzes the arguments advanced by the Mohammedan theologians of the

[1] *Kobetz* ii, p. 10a.

[2] Compare *Moreh* i, 2.

[3] Introduction to *Perek Helek*, towards the end. Compare also the introduction to *Seder Tohoroth*, towards the end.

Kalam school to prove the existence and unity of God. These chapters in which some of the obscurest metaphysical problems are presented to the reader with crystal-like transparency are well worthy even today to serve as an introduction to the study of philosophy. But the most overwhelming proof for this unique feature of Maimonides' style is afforded by the fact that, in spite of his earnest endeavor—which, by the way, is frankly admitted by him—to veil his philosophic views from the mass of the people, his Moreh, which addresses itself to an exclusive circle of mature thinkers, became in his hands, very much against his intention, a work of bewitching lucidity and charm of presentation.

However, lucidity and brevity do not as yet constitute a style, least of all an individual style. To bring this about a number of characteristics are required which impart taste and individuality to style, even as chemical ingredients do in the case of water. Needless to say these characteritsics, too, are abundantly represented in Maimonides' manner of writing. We must not lose sight of the fact that nothing perhaps is more alien to Maimonides' make-up than one-sidedness. Maimonides was too much a man of practical wisdom to ride an abstract principle to death and shut his eyes to the innumerable modifications which no principle can escape in its application to the needs of living reality. Just as his system of ethics, though permitting man to pursue only that which is useful, that which tends to keep him sound in mind and body, and thereby enables him to devote himself to metaphysical speculation, makes nevertheless provision for the sensations of pleasure, insofar as they

help indirectly to refresh and stimulate the thinking capacity of man,—so also Maimonides as a stylist, while limiting the function of style to the adequate transmission of thought, yet unhesitatingly resorts to all the accessory stylistic devices which may in an indirect manner lead to that end, whether it be by way of illustrating the subject more concretely, or by keeping alive the interest of the reader, and thereby rendering him more susceptible to the ideas of the writer.

Among these stylistic devices one of the most important is the use of metaphorical expressions, which, in a more elaborate form, appear as illustrations. A metaphor or an illustration, being derived from concrete reality, is far more apt to bring an idea nearer to the understanding of most men, which moves within the limits of concrete objects, than the profoundest philosophic argumentations. Maimonides therefore shows a special predilection for metaphors and illustrations, which he handles with the skill of a master, and in the use of which, as is apparent from many of his utterances, he regards the biblical authors as his unapproachable models. A few examples selected at random from his writings—they may be multiplied *ad libitum*—may serve to illustrate our point.[1]

[1] It is almost unnecessary to add that it is not always certain whether a given expression is peculiar to Maimonides only, or may have been used by other writers. In the last analysis, however, this question is irrelevant. For the individuality of an author depends after all on the manner in which he utilizes the available resources of the language.

METAPHORS: "He hurls the shafts of his ignorance at him" (*Moreh*, Introduction).—"Their brains were sullied by false opinions" (*ibidem*).—"A lamp which illumines the secret recesses of this treatise" (*ibidem*).—"This (the explanation of the biblical anthropomorphisms) is a key opening up many places which are barred by gates" (*ibidem*, towards the end)[1]—"He should not let loose the reins of his speech" (*Moreh* ii, . . .).—"Hold fast to this idea, for it is a wall which I have built around the faith, so that it may encompass it round about and keep off the stones which people hurl against it" (*ibidem*, ii, 17).

ILLUSTRATIONS: The pleasures in this life and in the life hereafter have nothing in common with one another. "If those of us who deserve it will have the privilege of attaining this station after death they will in all likelihood be altogether incapable of appreciating bodily pleasures and will hardly have any desire for them, just as little as a mighty ruler would be ready to renounce his throne and once more play ball on the streets, although there was undoubtedly a time when he preferred ball playing to ruling" (Introduction to *Perek Helek*).—The Torah holds out to those who obey its precepts material reward in the hereafter, just as a boy whose elders wish to stimulate him in his studies first promise him sweets and then, as he grows older, clothes, money, honors, etc. (*ibidem*).[2]—Metaphysics is the most important and the most exalted branch of knowledge. Yet it is fraught with the gravest dangers for immature minds, just as meat and wine, though substantial articles of food, are dangerous to the suckling (*Moreh*, i, 33).—God may be described in a vulgar as well as in a refined way, just as a king may be characterized as a venerable old man of tall stature and with a white skin, or as a man surrounded by a retinue of armed horsemen, or his power may be described in a more subtle manner by pointing to a puny and feeble

[1] The simile of door and gate is used in a similar connection in many other passages of Maimonides' writings.

[2] Another application of the same simile is quoted by Rosin, *Die Ethik des Maimonides*, p. 60, Anm. 4.

money-changer standing before his money table and showering a torrent of abuse upon a giant of a fellow who humbly begs of him a penny and who leaves quietly without making use of his superior strength (*ib.* i, 6).—The possibility of attaining to a knowledge of the Divine essence by applying to God negative attributes is illustrated by the manner in which a man who has never seen a ship may by mere denials be afforded an approximate notion of its appearance (*ib.* i, 60).—The radical difference between the knowledge possessed by God and that possessed by man is happily elucidated by a comparison with the difference subsisting between the knowledge which an ordinary man may have of a clock and the knowledge of it on the part of the mechanic, the latter having known it before it came into existence (*ib.* iii, 21). The various stages in our recognition of God are beautifully illustrated by the simile of the king whose existence may be realized with ever increasing vividness outside the capital, within the capital, in the royal palace, and finally in the throne chamber (*ib.* iii, 51).

The effect of a simile may be considerably strengthened by the additional force of *contrast*. One or two examples will suffice to characterize this linguistic device, of which Maimonides is exceedingly fond:

According to Aristotle who denies that Divine Providence extends to the individuals of the human race, there is no difference whatsoever between the dropping off of a leaf, or the falling down of a stone, and the drowning of an assembly of great and godly men who happen to be on a wrecked vessel. Just as little is there, according to Aristotle, any difference between an ox whose excrements have fallen on an ant hill, destroying the tiny animals, and a sacred building which has tumbled down, burying the worshippers beneath its ruins,—or between a cat, killing a mouse or a spider devouring a fly[1] and a lion who assaults and tears a God-inspired prophet (*Moreh* iii, 17).—The Torah is in every word a revelation of God. There is no difference

[1]The simile of the cat and the spider recurs in Maimonides' epistle to the wise men of Marseilles (*Mobetz* ii, p 25b.)

between the verse "and the sons of Ham are Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan," (Gen. x, 16), or the verse "and the name of his wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred (Gen. xxxvi, 39), and the verses "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. xx, 2) and "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deut. vi, 4.—Introduction to *Perek Helek*) [1]

It may be seen from some of the passages quoted in the foregoing that Maimonides is prone to indulge in forceful language. Frequently his manner of expression becomes drastic, without, however, sinking to the point of vulgarity:[2]

"Our work (the Commentary on the Mishnah) is not intended to impart reason to stones but rather to be intelligible to those who possess intelligence" (Introduction to the Mishnah).—"The people who believe in the corporeality of God count themselves among the wise men of Israel. Their real place, however, is among the most idiotic of men, and they go astray like the cattle, their brains being crammed with the crazy notions of old women" (*Kobetz* ii, p. 8a).—"Do not accept what the non-Jewish fools and the majority of Jewish blockheads believe" (*Mishne Torah, Hilkhoth Teshubah* v, 2).—"Man has no right to eat everything which excites his appetite, like a dog or an ass" (*ibidem, Hilkhoth De'oth* iii, 2).—"A learned man when speaking should not shout and yell like animals and wild beasts" (*ibidem* v, 7).

[1] Concerning the last quoted verses compare also above' p. 185 and p. 196.

[2] This alone would suffice to brand as a bold forgery the so-called Testament of Maimonides addressed to his son which contains the following tactless harangue: "They (the Jewish scholars of France) recognize God while they are enjoying boiled beef spiced with vinaigre and garlick, so that the odor of the vinaigre and the steam (sic!) of the garlick penetrates their brain and they actually believe that they are thus able to recognize God at all times."—Compare Bacher, *Die Bibelexegese des Maimonides*, p. 19.

One of the stylistic contrivances which, on account of its invigorating effect upon the reader, never fails to stimulate his interest and susceptibility is *wit*. Maimonides frequently resorts to wit which, however, in his case, as in the case of most Jews, does not manifest itself in the form of humor, the latter being in its very nature purposeless, or, as Kant would say, disinterested, but rather in the shape of sarcasm which is never altogether devoid of a moral tinge. Frequently the effect of Maimonides' sarcasm is heightened by the quotation of biblical (and occasionally talmudic) phrases,[1] for the reason that a quotation which is familiar to the reader is able to release automatically a whole string of associations and, because of this saving of energy, produces both a stronger and quicker impression:

> The predecessors of Maimonides who had made the attempt to enumerate the six hundred and thirteen biblical commandments had proceeded without any definite underlying principle: *they mount up to heaven: they go down to the deeps* (Psalm cvii, 26.—*Sefer ha-Mitzwoth*, ed. Bloch, p. 51).—The resurrection of the dead is confined to the pious. How, indeed, should the wicked rise to life again, they who are dead while still alive?!" (Introduction to *Perek Helek*).—[2] Those Jews who take the utterances of the Talmudic sages in their literal sense and thus put into their mouths all kinds of absurdities make a travesty of the Divine promise to Israel: 'This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the peoples that, when they hear all these statutes, shall

[1] They are generally quoted by Maimonides in the original Hebrew, even though the language of the particular work be Arabic.

[2] Allusion to the well-known Talmudic saying, according to which the wicked are called dead during their life-time.

say: Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people' (Deut. iv, 6). For were non-Jews to learn what those Jews ascribe to their own sages, they would exclaim: 'Surely this small nation is a foolish and unenlightened people' (*ibidem*).[1] —Those who sin most in that direction are the preachers[2] who try to make people understand what they themselves are incapable of understanding. Now being devoid of understanding, the least they could do would be to keep silent. *Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it would be your wisdom*! (Job xiii, 5.—*Ibidem*)[3]—He who is in a position to save his life by fleeing from the power of a despotic ruler and fails to do so is to be likened to *a dog that returneth to his vomit* (Proverbs xxvi, 2.—*Mishne Torah, Hilkhoth Yesode ha-Torah*, v, 5.)

One of the characteristic features of Maimonides' style which at first sight seems to contradict his entire way of thinking but as an indirect means of stimulating the reader and thereby keeping his attention retains its justification is the use of *rhymed word-pairs*. It is hardly necessary to point out that phonetic word combinations of this kind, which are to be found in every language, often become common property and therefore lay no claim to individual ownership. Nevertheless, the frequency with which they are to be found in Maimonides' writings entitles us to regard them as a specific trait of Maimonides' literary expression. Out of the vast amount of the available material the following few examples may be quoted,—all of them gathered from Maimonides' Arabic writings:

[1] The play on words is even more striking in Hebrew: *rak 'am sakhal we-nabal ha-goy ha-katan ha-zeh*, instead of the biblical words *rak 'am hakham we-nabon ha-goy ha-gadol ha-zeh*.

[2] Attacks upon the Darshanim, or preachers, are found elsewhere in Maimonides' writings; compare *Kobetz* ii, p. 31b.

[3] The same verse is similarly used *Kobetz* ii, p. 9b.

ghayatuha wa-nihayatuha "Their aim and end," *Moreh* i, 4a; ii, 42b, 73a; iii, 47a, etc.—*al-gharib al-'ajib* "strange and wonderful," *ib.* i, 91b; ii, 92a; iii, 44b; 78a, etc.—*yakuf wa-yakif* "he holds back and stands still," *ib.* i, 16a; 36a.—*af'aluhu wa-akwaluhu* "his words and deeds," *ib.* i, 15b-*Sefer Ha-mitzwoth*, ed. Bloch, p. 142.—*la bi-tas-rih wa-la bi-talwih* "neither expressly nor allulsively," *Moreh* ii, 76b; iii, 11a.—*at-takdir wa't-tadbir* "the estimate and arrangement," *ib.* iii, 74b; 95b.—*ta'limuhu wa-tafhimuhu*" to make him know and understand," *ib.* iii, 2a.—*li'l-jahil wa'd-dahil* "to the ignorant and thoughtless," *ib.* i, 3a.—*at-ta'addud wa't-tajaddud* "preparation and regeneration," *ib.* iii, 44a.—*as-salih wa't-talih* "the pious and wicked," *ib.* iii, 48a.—*al-barara wa'ssahara* "the deserts and wildernesses," *ib.* iii, 60a.

We are thus in a position to witness the process by which the style of Maimonides, though orginally conceived of as a mere vehicle for the correct transmission of ideas and therefore denied all consideration beyond that immediate purpose, imperceptibly grew in importance and independence and ultimately attained not only to lucidity, which is an indispensable requirement, but also to beauty, which may easily be dispensed with. Maimonides' style is not only wonderfully translucent; it is at the same time extraordinarily forceful, plastic and fluent, frequently carrying along the reader in its flow, yet graceful and balanced. In this manner the style of Maimonides, without his noticing it, and certainly without his wishing it, reached that perfection and elegance which fascinates the modern reader of Maimonides' writings even there where their philosophic content, the product of a glorious but antiquated culture, is of itself unable to command his interest.

XIII

THE PROBLEM OF POLISH JEWRY*

THE expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 transferred the center of Judaism from the Iberian peninsula to the ancient Empire of Poland. For nearly five hundred years Poland, using this term in its old geographic connotation, has harbored the bulk of the Jewish people and has been the seat of its spiritual leadership. Protected by the Polish kings, the Jews of Poland not only became a vital factor in the economic development of the country, but they were also able to evolve a culture of their own which has added a glorious page to the annals of the Jewish people With the emigration of the Jews from Polish territory, due to persecution and discrimination on the part of its later masters, the influence of Polish-Jewish culture spread to other Jewries beyond the confines of Poland and even those of Europe. In happier climes, in the warming sunshine of liberty, Polish-Jewish culture, brought into contact with modern life, has grown into a valuable factor in the spiritual progress of humanity.

The problem of Polish Jewry has not only an economic and political, but also an essentially cultural

*First published in the *New York Times Magazine*, January 14, 1917. Some aspects of the Polish-Jewish question are discussed at greater length in my book "The Jews of Russia and Poland. A Bird's-eye View of Their History and Culture." New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916.

aspect. It is not my intention here to deal with the former phase of the problem. The tragic paradox of a people, naturally gifted and industrious, reduced by artificial discrimination to unspeakable economic misery, contains in itself the solution of the problem. In the following I shall attempt to point out briefly the more complicated, because less tangible, cultural bearings of the problem of Polish Jewry.

The roots of this problem lie deep down in history. The Jews are to be found among the earliest inhabitants of Poland. The ancient Polish sagas presuppose the existence of Jews in pre-historic Poland; a Jew, by the name of Abraham Prokhovnik, is mentioned as having been offered the Polish crown, which he declined in favor of the wise Piast, the legendary progenitor of the Piast dynasty. The origin of these early Jewish settlers is still the subject of scientific dispute. Certain it is that this ancient Jewish element, which had possibly come from the East, was followed, beginning with the eleventh century, by a larger influx from the West, notably from Germany and the adjoining countries, which decided the character of Polish Jewry and made it the leader of the Jews of Western Europe.

The cultural development of Polish Jewry was determined by the peculiar social and economic structure of Poland. From the beginning until the end of her political existence Poland was a country of estates, sharply divided from one another in their interests and aspirations. In its primitive, purely agricultural stage Poland possessed but two estates, the nobles who owned the soil, and the serfs who tilled

the soil for their noble masters. It was sadly in need of a middle class to introduce and cultivate commerce and handicrafts. Realizing this need, the rulers of Poland opened the gates of their country to the neighboring Germans, who came in large numbers and soon formed the backbone of the urban population. In conformity with the structure of the Polish state, they were segregated into a separate class, the estate of burghers or *oppidani*, and were granted the so-called Magdeburg Law, vouchsafing to them complete administrative and cultural autonomy within the municipalities founded or populated by them. The German settlers retained for several centuries their national distinctiveness. They yielded but slowly to the process of Polonization, leaving deep traces in the language and civilization of Poland.

The same rulers who invited the Germans into their territories welcomed also the advent of the Jews. Driven by inhuman persecution and attracted by the prospect of a peaceful existence, the Jews of Germany and adjacent lands fled to Poland as a haven of refuge. They brought thither the remnants of their wealth left to them by their persecutors, and with this wealth their commercial and financial genius which soon made them a vital factor in the economic development of the new land. Shut out by their occupation from the older two estates of the nobles and serfs, and by their religion from the rising third estate of the burghers, the Jews of Poland were segregated into an estate of their own, and granted by the Polish rulers, who valued their services highly, an autonomous organization, similar in character and extent to that of the German *oppidani*.

The beginnings of this autonomy may be traced as far back as 1264, when Prince Boleslav of Kalish conferred his famous statute of privileges upon the Jews of his principality. It was completed by the decree of King Sigismund Augustus issued on August 13, 1551, which bestowed upon the Jewish Community, the *Kahal*, or *Kehilla*, the character of an independent municipal body, discharging not only religious and cultural but also fiscal, administrative and judicial functions. For a variety of reasons, which need not detain us here, the kings of Poland no less than the Jews were anxious to preserve the autonomous separateness of the Jewish Community. They frowned upon the attempts of some Jews to appeal to the jurisdiction of non-Jewish law courts, and they placed the arm of the State at the disposal of the *Kahal*, to the point of granting it the right of passing the death sentence upon its recalcitrant members.

On the substructure of the autonomy of the *Kahal*, or the individual Jewish Community, there gradually arose a widely ramified Jewish organization, capped by the Council of the Four Lands (*Wa'ad 'Arba Aratzoth*), which comprised the four great provinces of Poland and was recognized by the authorities as the supreme representation of Polish Jewry, under the official title *Congressus Judaicus*, or the Jewish Diet.

This elaborate scheme of Jewish self-government continued practically until the end of the Polish Commonwealth. The Council of the Four Lands was dissolved in 1764, only eight years before the first partition of Poland. The *Kahal*, or the individual Jewish Community, survived a little longer. It was

abolished in the Kingdom of Poland, which corresponds to present day Russian Poland, in 1822, and in the other Polish provinces (Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia, etc.), which were variously annexed by Russia, in 1844. The vast self-government of the *Kahal* was reduced to the narrow range of the purely congregational affairs of Jewry.

This century-long development as an autonomous group, coupled with its involuntary segregation from the rest of the population, laid its indelible impress upon the character of Polish Jewry. It was responsible, on the one hand, for the extraordinary intensity of Jewish cultural life, and for its entire isolation from the spiritual life of Poland, on the other. The intensity of Polish-Jewish culture finds few parallels in the history of Judaism or, for that matter, in the annals of humanity. Excluded by the hatred of the Church and by the contempt and jealousy of the nobles and burghers, from all participation in the affairs of the country, the Jews of Poland fell back upon their own spiritual resources and concentrated the pent-up mental and moral energy of the ages on the cultivation of their religious and cultural heritage. The official recognition of Talmudic law as the basis of Jewish self-government, paralleled by the position of the Madgeburg law in the municipal autonomy of the German burghers, turned the spiritual endeavors of Polish Jewry in the direction of the immense Rabbinical literature of Judaism, stamping itself permanently upon the mentality of the Jews of Poland. The loss in expansion was made up by the increased intensity of the cultural life of Polish Jewry.

It is difficult to convey to the outsider the extraordinary intensity of this life. Suffice it to say that in the midst of a population in which only the priests and the nobles possessed the elements of culture the Jews of Poland stood forth as a community of students and scholars. Illiteracy was entirely unknown, and, to quote the evidence of a seventeenth century chronicler, many a Polish-Jewish community, numbering fifty members, could boast of thirty men holding the title *Morenu*, a distinction corresponding in the amount of erudition presupposed by it somewhat to a modern University degree. This intellectualism, tempered with a goodly dose of mysticism, forms the most striking characteristic of Polish-Jewish culture. It is still conspicuous today wherever the Polish Jews are offered the chance of a free human existence.

However, owing to political and social ostracism, the intensity of Polish-Jewish culture was marked and marred by an excessive one-sidedness and a complete aloofness from the life and thought of the outside world. We realize this best when we compare the development of Polish Jewry with that of its predecessor in the hegemony of the Jewish people, the Jewry of Spain. While the Jews living under Moorish rule, though staunch in their adherence to their Jewish heritage, were a powerful cultural factor in the life of their neighbors and transmitted Moorish culture to modern Europe, the Jews of Poland remained outside the range of Polish as well as of general human progress. To be sure, there is ample evidence to show that in an earlier age the Jews of Poland were far from being as spiritually self-centered as they became

afterwards. To quote but one or two examples out of many, in the sixteenth century we find a number of Polish Jews enrolled as students in the University of Padua, and in the following century there were so many Jews in the medical fraternity of Poland that in 1623 an envious Christian physician found it necessary to issue a special publication in which he vented his spite on his Jewish colleagues. But the hostility of the Polish Church which preached that the Jews were suffered to exist "for the sole purpose of recalling to our minds the tortures of our Saviour," the contempt of the nobles who used the Jews as sponges to suck up the toil of their serfs, the hatred of these very serfs who looked upon them as the direct instruments of their oppressors, the envy of the burghers who saw in the Jews dangerous rivals, left no choice to the Jews except to withdraw into their own shell and to foster the spirit of aloofness and clannishness which has made Polish Jewry an element distinct in its thoughts and habits from the rest of the population.

It would lead us too far afield to dwell on the many aspects of this unfortunate concomitant to an otherwise truly unique cultural phenomenon. It will be sufficient to point out two characteristic features of this Polish-Jewish exclusiveness, which down to this day are regarded by many as the principal difficulties of the Polish-Jewish problem,—I refer to the distinctiveness of the Jewish population of Poland in dress and language.

The Jewish religion which, in its desire to secure the survival of the Jewish people in the midst of an over-

whelming majority, has endeavored in every possible way to preserve the distinctiveness of the Jews, takes at the same time full cognizance of the existence of constant and unavoidable relations between them and the non-Jewish world and has, therefore, refrained from legislating concerning the Jewish form of dress. This is seen nowhere more clearly than in Poland itself. For the peculiar attire which is still worn by the masses of Polish Jewry and is an eyesore to the Poles is nothing but the ancient Polish national costume which the Poles themselves subsequently discarded in favor of a more modern form of dress. The characteristic pieces of the traditional Polish-Jewish costume are still known by their ancient Polish names, and the peculiar fur cap, the so-called *Shtraimel*, which is regarded today as an unmistakable token of Jewish orthodoxy, can be shown to have been worn at one time by the Christian clergy of Poland.

But the Church no less than the nobles were bitterly opposed to this similarity of external appearance between the Jews and the Christians. A number of enactments passed by the former at its Synods and by the latter in their Diets *compelled* the Jews to yield on this point and to adopt, or, rather, to retain, their distinct form of dress. In the course of time the antiquarian costume of the Jews became surrounded in their eyes with the halo of religious sanction, and when in the nineteenth century the Polish government in the truncated Kingdom of Poland and the Russian Government in the Polish provinces occupied by it demanded, with a sudden turn of policy, a change of dress on the part of the

Jews they met with a stubborn refusal. The accidental character of this external factor in the life of Polish Jewry may be gauged from the fact that the same Polish Jews, when settling in other countries where they are allowed to follow their natural inclinations, lose no time in ridding themselves of this historic sign of discrimination foisted upon them by the prejudices of their neighbors.

The same applies to a more important, perhaps the most important, aspect of the Polish-Jewish problem, the peculiar vernacular which the Polish Jews brought with them centuries ago from their German homelands and, in their overwhelming majority, continue to speak until today. Ever since their dispersion the Jews have been a bilingual people. While remaining faithful to their ancient national tongue, the Hebrew, as the vehicle of their religious and spiritual self-expression, the Jews have always spoken the language of the nation in whose midst they dwelled. There is scarcely a language of civilized humanity which at one time or another was not used by the Jews as their vernacular.

The same is true of Poland. According to a theory held by many prominent authorities, the Jews of early Poland spoke a Slavonian dialect, and there are traces of literary use of the Polish language by Jews in the sixteenth century and later. The responsibility for the preservation of the ancient German dialect in the midst of the Polish environment does not rest with the Jews.

Two factors, a positive and a negative one, account for this peculiar linguistic survival. The policy of

isolation ruthlessly pursued by the Polish estates acted as a positive encouragement to the Jews to retain and cultivate their accustomed speech. No less important was the negative factor, the lack of a strong linguistic pressure from the outside. The Polish language reached the maturity of a national and cultural factor at a comparatively late date in the development of the Polish people. For a long time German remained the language of the burgher class and was spoken in their churches and law courts. And even among the other estates it was not Polish but Latin which, during the greater part of Polish history, served as the medium of cultural life. In the sixteenth century, to quote the words of a contemporary, there were "more Latinists in Poland than there used to be in Latium," and the English historian William Coxe who visited Poland about 1784 comments on the prevalence of Latin in Poland and tells us of a common soldier who conversed with great fluency in that language. Thus it was unavoidable that, in contradiction with their general historic habits, the Jews of Poland should have retained a foreign dialect which, in other circumstances, the memory of German persecution alone would have prompted them to exchange for the language of their adopted country.

This dialect which gradually developed into an independent tongue now generally designated as Yiddish was till comparatively recent times mainly confined to the role of a vernacular, while the functions of a literary medium of expression were monopolized by Hebrew. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, owing to a variety of factors which it would lead us

too far afield to discuss in this connection, the Yiddish dialect was raised to the dignity of a literary language and in a short time found its masters, such as Mendele Mokher Sforim, Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, and a host of others, who may well compare with the leading exponents of European literature. The Yiddish press sprang up and became a powerful civilizing agency among the Jews of Poland. The extent of its influence may be gathered from the fact, which, curiously enough is pointed out reproachfully by the Poles, that the leading Yiddish newspaper of Warsaw commanded but a few years ago a larger circulation than that of all the Polish newspapers combined. Here again the true place of Yiddish in the life of the Jews, which among the masses of Polish Jewry has assumed a semi-religious character, may be illustrated by the attitude of the Polish Jews who settle outside of Poland. To quote an example near at hand, the Polish-Jewish immigrants in this free land, while naturally loving the language in which for more than six hundred years they have enshrined their woes and joys, and while retaining it as a convenient medium of expression, are eager, probably to a greater extent than any other section of foreigners, to adopt the language of the new environment. The sons of these immigrants employ and regard the English language as the exclusive vehicle of their daily and literary expression.

The existence on Polish territory of an element distinct in its culture and mode of life, forming 14 per cent of the total population and more than 50 per cent of the urban population, presents undoubtedly a problem of serious magnitude. It is a problem not

only for the Poles who are approaching the realization of their national and cultural aspirations, but also for the Polish Jews who feel themselves part and parcel of the country in which they have lived and developed from the very dawn of its history, and who yet have the legitimate desire to preserve their ancient cultural possessions. The problem cannot be solved by brutal force and by the destruction of old cultural values. It can only be solved by mutual sympathy and toleration, and by a sincere desire for an equitable adjustment. Such an adjustment is bound to be reached when both sides, discarding the prejudice and mistrust of a sad past, will strive for it in the spirit of equality and fraternity.

The great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz spoke of the Poles and the Jews as the two martyr nations which resembled one another in the intensity of their past sufferings and the brightness of their future prospects, and he passionately appealed to his fellow-Poles to work shoulder to shoulder with "Israel, the elder brother," for the consummation of their common destiny. The Jews of Poland, despite all discrimination and isolation, have always been faithful citizens of the land which sheltered them and the best they possessed for so many centuries; they have fought side by side with the Poles in the many sad crises of modern Polish history. "Israel, the elder brother," is ready to consecrate the best that is in him to the upbuilding of a free and happy Poland. And Polish Jewry can only give its best when it will give its whole natural and historic strength, and not merely a soulless and lifeless reflection of its real self.

XIV

THE PRESENT JEWISH OUTLOOK IN RUSSIA.*

THE Russian revolution marks a new era in the history of Russian Jewry. It is a revolution in the literal sense of the word, an overturning of its former conditions of life, not only in the concrete domain of political and economic interests, but also in the loftier sphere of spiritual and cultural development. Whatever the course of general Russian events may prove to be, Russian Jewry can never be what it has been hitherto. It is not my intention to engage in hazardous predictions about the future of Russia, with which the destinies of Russian Jewry are intimately bound up. Only arrogance or ignorance can claim to penetrate the heavy mist which clouds the titanic upward struggle of the Russian people from the lowest depths of slavery to the summits of liberty. I shall confine myself to the discussion of one aspect of this tremendous spectacle: the effect of the Russian revolution upon the inner development of Russian Jewry. Will the emancipation of Russian Jewry strengthen or weaken the immense resources of Jewish energy and loyalty which have been stored up in it in the course of centuries? It is a question which is fraught with incalculable consequences for the entire Jewish people. For the Jews all over the world draw directly or indirectly upon the vast reservoir of Jewish strength in the former empire of the Czars.

*Published in the *Jewish Forum* for February, 1918.

The gravity of the Russian-Jewish situation must be patent to everyone who is acquainted with the history of Jewish emancipation in other countries. The student of the Jewish past, who is able to divest himself of partisan bias, and who is courageous enough to look facts squarely in the face, cannot deny that, from the point of view of Jewish spiritual life, Jewish emancipation in the West of Europe has proved a flat failure. True, the emancipation has released the pent-up energies of the Jews, but it has also diverted them into channels that lead away from Judaism. It has benefited the Jews as individuals; it has affected disastrously the Jews as a group. It has dried up the springs of Jewish thinking and living,—and if Judaism still manages to hold its own it is only because it has been able to draw upon the resources of the Jewries which have not yet been emancipated. It has stricken the Jewish mind with sterility and has failed to produce genuine Jewish values. Even the so-called "Science of Judaism," which no doubt derived its stimulus from the contact of Judaism with the culture of the environment, owes its origin to men, who, like Zunz, Geiger and Rapoport, were born and bred in old-fashioned non-emancipated Jewish surroundings; and after a generation or two of notable achievements, it now depends to an overwhelming extent upon the contributions of Jewish scholars who hail from Eastern Europe. We are, therefore, justified in asking ourselves, and asking ourselves with an anxious mind, whether Russian-Jewish emancipation will follow the course of Jewish emancipation in

Western Europe, and whether it is likely to lead to the same disastrous consequences of de-Judaization.

This anxiety is perhaps more warranted in the case of Russian Jewry than it was in the case of the Jews of Western Europe. For in Western Europe emancipation was a slow process which took many decades to mature, and even when it was finally embodied in the constitutions of the Western European nations it often proved a scrap of paper, leaving full scope for anti-Jewish discrimination. In Russia, however, the emancipation of the Jews came at one stroke, like the breaking forth of the sun from beneath a black cloud. And with the radical tendency and the love of liberty which are characteristic of the Russian people, there is every reason to believe that the emancipation of the Jews will not remain on paper but will be lived up to in the letter as well as in the spirit. Moreover, the opportunities offered to the Jews in the midst of a population of 170,000,000, and on a territory which comprises one-sixth of the surface of the globe, are infinitely greater than those that have ever smiled upon the Jews of a Western European country. The chances held out by a new and free Russia, whether they be economic, political, social or cultural, are bound to cast a fascinating spell upon the Russian Jews who have, for more than a century, been held down by the iron grip of Czardom. As a matter of fact, even under the autocratic régime, many Jews of Russia, defying the numberless obstacles and difficulties placed in their path by Russian despotism, have managed to break through the walls of the

Ghetto and play an important part, not only in the economic but also in the spiritual and political life of Russia, and this drift from the narrow interests of Judaism towards the limitless possibilities of general Russian life is bound to increase a thousandfold with the immensely multiplied opportunities offered by an emancipated Russia. It is therefore natural to expect that the concentration of Jewish energy upon the upbuilding of new Russia will in many cases lead to a detachment from Judaism and Jewish interests. Leon Trotzky, who, according to despatches in the public press, recently declared that he did not feel himself to be a Jew, did not speak for himself alone; he undoubtedly spoke for a numerous class of Jews in whom the solicitude for Russia has crushed out their loyalty to Judaism.

There is, in addition, another element of danger in the Russian revolution, to which very little attention has been paid hitherto. One of the principal factors making for a strong and genuine Jewish life in Russia has been the vastness and compactness of Russian Jewry. To mention but one example: the extraordinary growth of literary productivity in the Hebrew and Yiddish languages, which is characteristic of modern Russian-Jewish life, is entirely unthinkable without the large numbers of patrons and readers upon whom it depends for assistance and encouragement. In the new Russia, however, Jewry is faced by the danger of complete dismemberment. The conquests of the Teuton armies have already detached two of the most important sections of Russian Jewry: the Jewry of Russian Poland and the Jewry of Lithu-

ania. And the recent declaration of Ukrainianin dependence involves the detachment of the third important section of Russian Jewry which is situated in the Russian south-west. These principal constituencies of Russian Jewry, representing three distinct types, were formerly held together by a similarity of political, economic and social conditions, but, without this similarity, they are bound to drift apart. Even if the dream of a "United States of Russia" should ultimately come true, these territories will not form a unit such as is represented by the United States of America, which are divided from one another by subordinate political interests. They will rather form a confederacy after the pattern of Austria-Hungary, in which the divisions, being not only political and economic but also racial and cultural, are far more fundamental. The contact between the future Jews of the Ukraine and the future Jews of an independent Poland or Lithuania can scarcely be expected to be more intimate than is, for instance, the relationship between the Jewries of Galicia, Hungary, or Bohemia, which form entirely separate entities. and develop along fundamentally different lines. In a way it may be said that already now Russian Jewry, as a geographical unit, has ceased to exist. For the Pale of Settlement no longer belongs to Russia, and the Jewry of Russia proper is confined to a few communities of the interior, such as Petrograd and Moscow, and to the fugitives from the Pale who have been driven by the exigencies of war into the central Russian provinces. This geographical decentralization of Russian Jewry will of necessity have a disintegrating effect upon its

spiritual and cultural life, thereby accelerating the process of decomposition which is likely to follow in the wake of Jewish emancipation.

Such is the Jewish outlook in the new free Russia. It is an outlook fraught with dismal possibilities: the dawn of Jewish liberty may prove the dusk of Jewish loyalty, and the rise of the Russian Jew may entail the decline of Russian Judaism. Indeed, those of us who place the spiritual welfare of Judaism above the material progress of Jewry would have little reason to rejoice in the liberty which has come to the Jews of Russia, were the emancipation of Russian Jewry to follow the example set by Jewish emancipation in Western Europe.

Fortunately, however, there are many indications which give us reasonable assurance that the emancipation of Russian Jewry will *not* follow the example of Western European emancipation. These indications may be found in the radically different attitude towards Jewish emancipation both on the part of Russian Jewry and on the part of the Russian people.

To begin with the latter, the conception of liberty evolved by the Russian revolution is essentially different from the ideals set up by the French revolution. The French revolution proclaimed liberty, equality and fraternity for the *individuals* of the human race but paid scant attention to the rights of the human *group*. Clermont-Tonnerre, the valiant advocate of Jewish emancipation, was quick in applying this fundamental principle of the French revolution to the Jews when, on December 23, 1789, he declared in the National Assembly: "To the Jews as a

nation everything shall be refused; to the Jews *as human beings* everything shall be granted!" It was a tacit implication that the price of Jewish emancipation could be nothing less than the national disintegration of Jewry, and the Jews of France understood and accepted this implication when, speaking through the Conference of Notables and the Great Synhedrion, they solemnly proclaimed that the Jews had ceased to form a nation.

In contradistinction to the French revolution and in advance of it, the Russian revolution has inscribed on its banner liberty, equality and fraternity for the human *groups*. It has proclaimed the freedom not only of the individual but also of individual aggregates, known as nations. The principle of national self-determination forms the substructure of free Russia and there is every reason to hope that the Russian people will not allow the Jewish nation to be excluded from the blessings of this new and larger liberty.

The same difference in attitude towards emancipation may be discerned among the Russian Jews themselves. They have benefitted by the bitter experiences of their Western European brethren and by their own former errors in that direction. For, at one time, Jewish emancipation in Russia seemed to take exactly the same course as the emancipation of Western Europe. It began, as it did in Germany, by a cultural transformation, using the Hebrew language and literature as a stepping stone to the culture of the environment. Isaac Baer Levinsohn, the father of the Hebrew renaissance in Russia, has justly been

called the Russian Mendelssohn, for, as in the case of Mendelssohn, his efforts led, entirely against his wishes, to a detachment from Judaism. When, again as in the West, the cultural emancipation was followed by the promise of civil emancipation under Alexander II. the mere promise was enough to send a tidal wave of assimilation through Russian Jewry which eventually threatened to swallow it. Fortunately, however, Russian Jewry was halted on its downward rush towards national self-annihilation. The process of assimilation was cut short by the pogroms, and ever since then the Jews of Russia have stood firmly their ground, spurning all inducements to national self-effacement and defying all the persecutions and temptations of Czardom. The national idea, which, having sprung into life before the pogroms, received an immense impetus from them, stamped itself indelibly upon the entire spiritual make-up of Russian Jewry. The national movement was subsequently consummated in Zionism which, ever since its inception, has derived its principal strength from Russian Jewry. But even those who stayed outside the Zionist movement were yet dominated by the Jewish national ideal, and were opposed with might and main to the idea of national self-renunciation.

At no time did this courageous self-assertion of Russian Jewry, as represented by its best elements, manifest itself more nobly and more conspicuously than it did during the last decade when, beginning with the revolutionary agitation of 1905, the Jews of Russia, undeterred by persecutions and pogroms,

fought fearlessly not only for their rights as men and citizens but also for their rights as Jews. Indeed, in modern Jewish history there is scarcely a more heartening example of Jewish loyalty and dignity than has been exhibited by the Jews of Russia in their struggle for emancipation under the régime of Nicholas II. Whereas in 1856, during the reign of Alexander II., the Jews had pleaded "that our gracious sovereign may bestow his kindness upon us, and, by distinguishing the grain from the chaff, may be pleased to accord a few moderate privileges to the most educated among us," and, in return for these privileges which were subsequently bestowed upon a few sections of Jewry, pledged themselves "that the sharply marked traits which distinguish the Jews from the native Russians should be levelled, and that the Jews should in their way of thinking and acting become akin to the latter,"[1] the Jews of modern Russia violently repudiated this flunkyish attitude. In reply to the ukase of Nicholas II, issued on December 12, 1904, promising various alleviations and opening up the prospect of a gradual emancipation to the Jews of Russia, thirty-two Jewish communities presented a petition to Count Witte in which they boldly declared "that the insulted dignity of man cannot become reconciled to half-measures but demands the complete removal of discrimination." Another petition, signed by twenty-six communities, asserted equally "that we consider every attempt to satisfy and assuage the Jewish population by partial

[1] See Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. ii, p. 160.

improvements of any kind as doomed to failure. We are expecting complete equality, as men in whom the feeling of self-respect is alive, as conscious citizens in a modern body politic." The Jewish community of Vilna, the "Lithuanian Jerusalem," added the following declaration: "As a cultured nation we demand the same rights of national-cultural self-determination which must be accorded to all nations which go to make up the Russian State." In March, 1905, the "League for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jewish People in Russia" was formed, which, in addition to the demand of complete civil emancipation, wrote on its banner "the freedom of national-cultural self-determination in all its manifestations."[1] The liberation of the Jewish people, and not merely of the Jewish individual, has been the keynote of Russian-Jewish emancipation.

It is extraordinarily characteristic of this attitude of Russian Jewry that immediately upon its liberation through the Russian revolution it issued a call for a convention of Russian Zionists. This convention met in Petrograd, in May, 1917, and was attended by five hundred delegates from all parts of Russia and by two thousand guests. The remarkable addresses delivered at that Convention voiced not only the whole-hearted allegiance of Russian Jewry to Russia but also its unshakable determination to hold aloft its ancient national ideals, calling upon the free Russian people to help it in the realization of these ideals.

[1] An elaborate account of the emancipation struggle in modern Russia will be found in the forthcoming third volume of Dubnow's "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland."

And it is just as characteristic of the attitude of the Russian people that, instead of frowning upon the demands of the Zionists, it received them with warm-hearted sympathy. The Minister for Foreign Affairs declared officially his readiness to assist the Jews in their strivings for a Jewish center in Palestine, while the Commander-in-chief of the Russian army issued an order of the day, calling upon the Jewish soldiers in the Russian ranks to congregate in the military headquarters for the purpose of electing delegates to the Zionist Convention and promising to defray the travelling expenses of the delegates out of the official funds.

This spirit of true liberty, which the Russian people no less than Russian Jewry have manifested in their attitude towards the question of Jewish rights, is a sufficient guarantee that Jewish emancipation in Russia will avoid the pitfalls of Western European emancipation, with all its disastrous consequences for Judaism. The Jews of Russia will refuse to be reconciled to that "slavery in freedom" which, as a great Jewish thinker has brilliantly shown, has proved the curse of emancipated Jewry in the West of Europe. The Russian Jews wi l endeavor to be truly free, free as men and as Jews; free to participate in the great Russia of the future, and to develop along their own lines towards a brighter future for the Jewish people.

By a concatenation of events, in which the believing Jew will humbly acknowledge the hand of "the Guardian of Israel that sleepeth not nor slumbereth," the proclamation of the Russian Government granting liberty to the Jews of Russia was followed in the

same year by the declaration of the British Government holding out the promise of national restoration to the Jewish people. A Jewish center on the historic soil of Judaism will prove a tremendous centripetal force which will counteract the centrifugal factors of modern Russian-Jewish life. Whatever the political destinies of Russian Jewry may prove to be, it will be held together by a common ideal and a common aspiration. In this wise the old vision of our Rabbis will come literally true: *athida Eretz Israel she-tithpashet be-kol ha-aratzoth*, "In the future the influence of the Land of Israel will spread to all the countries of the world."

XV

THE PROBLEM OF JUDAISM IN AMERICA*

IT is now a second time that I have been honored by an invitation to speak before the Mickve Israel Association. Some three years ago I had the privilege of delivering an address before you on the Prophet Jeremiah.[1] This occasion stands out prominently in my recollection. It was my first English address, and marked, in my private career, the beginning of a closer association with the life of this country. I have since endeavored to become more familiar with the language and conditions of the new land. I have studied as closely as opportunity permitted, the various aspects of Amercan life in general, and of American-Jewish life in particular, and now that I am asked again to speak before you, I find sufficient courage in my heart, instead of reverting to the trodden roads of the past, to venture upon the slippery paths of the present and to take up a subject which is, or ought to be, uppermost in the mind of every thinking Jew: the problem of Judaism in America.

It may seem bold for one whose residence in this country has only been of a few years' duration to speak on an American problem before an assembly

[1] See above p. 67 *et seq.*

*Lecture delivered before the "Mickve Israel Association" of Philadelphia, on December 8, 1907. Published in the *Jewish Comment* on December 25, 1908 and January 1, 1909.

which is deeply rooted in the American soil and intimately associated with American life. But perhaps I may say, as our Patriarch Abraham said to the native residents of Canaan: *Gher we-toshab anokhi 'immakhem*, "I am a stranger as well as a citizen in your midst." I have been in this country long enough to have overcome that nagging disposition of the stranger which seeksdel ight in fault-finding, and I have not yet been here long enough to have fallen a prey to that indiscriminate patriotism of the native which covereth every sin and acts on the principle: "right or wrong, it is my country." This happy medium between excessive skepticism and over-zealous enthusiasm, the result of circumstances for which I deserve no credit, coupled with a former study of the conditions of various Jewries at close range and the natural disposition of the student of the past to weigh the incidents of the moment against the experience of history, extenuates to some degree the boldness of my undertaking and constitutes my chief claim to your attention and consideration.

I think I shall serve the purpose of this lecture best, if I take up the problem of Judaism as a whole, referring, whenever necessary, to the important modifications in which this problem is mirrored in America.

In considering the problem of Judaism, I am probably expected to set out with an exact definition of what I understand by the term "Judaism." But if I allow myself to be entangled in the snares of definitions, which are, after all, only a decent way of begging the question, I am afraid I shall never be able to return to the subject of this lecture. If

definitions are irksome in general, because they represent the delicate attempt to reduce the phenomena of living, palpitating reality to a dead, stationary formula, and doubly irksome when applied to phenomena which bear the stamp of spirituality on their "ism," they are almost unattainable in the case of an historical organism like Judaism, which, during the whole unparalleled length of its history, has been undergoing uninterrupted, though imperceptible, changes, which in the course of its career has encountered innumerable influences of every origin and description, and, in consequence, presents in almost every age and country a modified appearance. It will, however, suffice for our immediate purposes, if I say, vaguely perhaps, but briefly, that Judaism represents the sum total of those inner characteristics, as instincts, sentiments, convictions and ideals, which are to a lesser or larger degree common to the individuals of the aggregate known as the Jewish people. If the Jews, or Jewry, represent the ethnological, or physical, appearance of the Jewish people, Judaism may be said to represent its spiritual, or psychological, make-up; in other words, Jewry constitutes the body, Judaism the spirit, or the soul, of the Jewish people. As the soul of the individual, so the soul of a nation is in itself invisible. It finds its visible expression in a certain manner of life, such as customs, habits and ceremonies, and in a certain spiritual productivity, such as literature, art and the like—in short, in the two spheres, which, taken together, form what we call the culture of a nation. Judaism would thus, more exactly, represent the Jewish soul, or spirit, and its outward manifestation in Jewish culture. Jewry

without Judaism is no more than a body without a spirit, a dead inanimate mechanism, which may, by sheer mechanical momentum, move on for a little while, but must in the end come to a complete standstill. The problem of Judaism would then consist in the fact that the soul, or spirit, of the Jewish people, as manifested in its culture, has in modern times shown symptoms of decay of so alarming a nature as to make us fear for its continued existence. The beginning of this decay is obviously coincident with the beginning of Jewish emancipation, that is to say, with the moment when the Jews left the Ghetto to join the life and the culture of the nations around them.

I know there are professional or well-meaning optimists in our midst who would fain deny the existence of this decay and, not unlike the false prophets before the downfall of Judea, would fain cry: "Peace! Peace!", while there is no peace. There are others who are courageous enough to admit the fact, but endeavor to give it a different interpretation. But he who keeps his eye open to truth and looks reality squarely in the face cannot for a moment be in doubt as to the correctness of the fact and its real bearing. We need but cast a glance on the status of Judaism in various countries before and after the emancipation to realize beyond a shadow of doubt the deadly, disintegrating effect of outward freedom on Judaism.

This effect would appear far more palpable, so palpable, indeed, that only dishonesty could deny it, were it not powerfully counteracted in many countries by anti-Semitic tendencies, on the one hand, which have checked and even turned back the progress of emancipation, and by the large stream of Jewish

emigration, on the other, which, proceeding from the lands of oppression to the lands of freedom, carries with it, on or under the surface, the preserving and reviving influences of the Ghetto. As it is, the effect of emancipation on Judaism is such as to justify our most serious apprehensions.

In Italy, which in times gone by presented one of the finest and brightest phases of Jewish culture, which only two generations ago was still able to produce a personality so profoundly and genuinely Jewish as S. D. Luzzato, and to present American Jewry in our own generation with a man like Sabato Morais, the founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America—in Italy the condition of Judaism at present is one of utter stagnation, and Jewish scholarship, which once upon a time had so many celebrated champions in that sunny land, is now represented by a few descendants of the Galician Ghetto.

In France, where centuries ago Talmudic Judaism found its most brilliant expounders, Judaism is but a lifeless and, we need scarcely add, an unsuccessful imitation of French Catholicism. Its tiny stream of Jewish life is almost exclusively supplied from the Ghetto of Alsace, where the Jews still speak their own dialect, and replenished in recent years by newcomers from Russia.

In German Jewry, the heart of the Jewish people in times of old and its brain in modern times, once celebrated for her saints and martyrs, and later renowned for her scholars and writers—in German Jewry we stumble on all sides against indifference and apostasy, and her intellectual productivity shows

an appalling decline. The decay of German Jewry would be far more tangible were it not powerfully counteracted by the immigration from the Russian and Polish Ghetto, and, to an extent not in the remotest suspected by outsiders, by the influence of the now Prussian, but formerly Polish, province of Posen, where Jewish life has still preserved many a genuine feature of Polish Judaism. One only has to recall the fact that, with very few exceptions, the past and present teachers of the three rabbinical colleges in Germany have come from Posen, Hungary, Galicia, or Russia, to realize the terrible intellectual impoverishment of the Jewry which was the originator of modern Hebrew literature and gave birth and name to the Science of Judaism.

In England Jewish emancipation, owing to the intensely religious spirit of the English nation, gave at first the promise of a genuine modern Jewish life. But this promise has not been fulfilled. The decomposition of English Jewry, being effectively checked by the conservative tendencies of England and the stream of Jewish immigration from Poland, proceeds much more slowly than elsewhere, but proceed it does, and no one perhaps is more pessimistic about the future of Judaism in that country than are, to judge by their public utterances, the leading English Jews themselves.

Far more striking and far more painful to record is the effect of modern conditions on Judaism in those countries where the Jews are still isolated and lead, or have till recently led, a genuinely Jewish life. We only have to point to the sudden change in the status of Judaism which has taken place before our

very eyes in Hungary, to the terrible decay of Judaism in Galicia and—I say it with a feeling of particular pain—to the frightful ravages in Jewish life and thought caused by the mere glimmer of emancipation in Russia, to realize what Judaism may expect from the effects of freedom and the influences of the surroundings.

So far the Old World. As for the New, no undue skepticism is necessary to recognize that—leaving aside for the moment the other side of the medal, which will be presented later—the condition of Judaism and the effect of its free exposure to external influences is scarcely different. To be sure, people who are content to tap the surface can easily point to the tremendous growth of American Judaism, to the ever increasing number of Jewish congregations and institutions. But these people seem, or wish, to forget that this development is the direct or indirect product of the Ghetto, for which this country deserves no credit whatsoever. The expansion of American Judaism is not an organic growth from within, but a mechanic addition from without. Its gain, to use a Biblical simile, is the gain of one who puts his earnings into a bag with holes. As long as the earnings exceed the holes, the bag seems constantly to swell. But no sooner will the earnings have stopped than the bag will begin to shrink and will finally collapse. The disintegrating influence of American conditions on Jewish life and productivity can be demonstrated most palpably in that section of American Jewry which has for a sufficient length of time been exposed to the life and liberty of this country, and in which the extent of de-Judaization stands in exact proportion to the

amount of freedom enjoyed by it. This process of de-Judaization is visible distinctly enough among the Children of the Ghetto and, to a far more appalling extent, among the Grandchildren of the Ghetto. An experienced Jewish minister of New York, who has for more than a quarter of a century closely watched the marvellous growth of Jewry in that largest Jewish center ever known in history, summed up some time ago, for purposes quite different from those pursued in this paper, the Jewish potentialities of the newly arrived population in the striking dictum: "What will our second and third generation be a quarter of a century hence? American? Yes. Jewish? Perhaps." This "perhaps," which people with a more skeptical turn of mind are disposed to turn into a plain "no," expresses in a nutshell the grave apprehensions which those acquainted with the situation entertain for the future of American Judaism.

Thus, wherever our gaze turns we witness the same spectacle, the decomposition of Judaism, of Jewish living and Jewish thinking, under the influence of freedom. No amount of high-sounding phraseology can deceive us as to the meaning of this terrible truth. Judaism which was able to subsist and even to develop in the narrowness and darkness of the Ghetto is cut off in its very strength when brought out into the airy expanse of modern life. Judaism which stood out like a rock amidst the billows of hatred and storms of persecution is melting away like wax under the mild rays of freedom. It may be painful to realize it and far more painful to express it. But if the correct diagnosis of a disease is indispensable for its remedy, then it is the sacred duty of every Jew

who loves his people and thinks of its future fearlessly to perceive and fearlessly to proclaim the critical condition of modern Judaism and the terrible dangers that beset it.

This apparent incompatibility of Judaism with modern life and culture is the most depressing and the most humiliating experience which can ever torment the soul of the thinking Jew with a particle of Jewish pride still left in his heart. It is a tragedy far more stirring and heartrending than all the material sufferings of our people. Yet there are but few in our midst who are fully aware of this terrible problem. The problem of the *Jews*, of the physical misery of our nation, engages the heart and the hand of every Jew with a spark of Jewish consciousness or Jewish sentiment in him. Powerful organizations grapple energetically, and more or less successfully, with this problem. But most of us utterly ignore the problem of *Judaism*, the problem of our spiritual misery. The majority of modernized Jews still swear by the panacea of Jewish emancipation, and pin all their hope and faith to the political, economic and social advancement of the Jews. Their policy may be summed up in the words of the Prophet: "When thou wilt deal thy bread to the hungry and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou wilt see the naked that thou wilt cover him, and thou wilt not hide thyself from thine own flesh, then shall thy light break forth as the dawn, and thy cure shall spring forth speedily." They are blind to the fact that the dawn of the Jews is the dusk of Judaism; that the nearer the problem of Jewry reaches its solution, the more complicated

and the more dangerous becomes the problem of Judaism; that the more emancipated, the more prosperous, the more successful the Jews become, the more impoverished, the more defenceless and the more threatened becomes Judaism, the only reason and the only foundation of their existence. And while our heart is aroused over the martyrs that fell by the hands of violent mobs, we witness with indifference the disappearance of that for which they became martyrs. And while we bewail the few leaves that were plucked off our trees by brutal hands, we coolly observe how large sections of our foliage wither and fall off, because the growing forces of the tree are too weak to hold them. Of what use is it, then, to boast of the achievements of Jewish emancipation and to point to the mental, economic and social advance of the Jewish people if purchased at the expense of the Jewish soul, without which Jewry is but an empty, and not always attractive, shell? Of what avail is all the material prosperity of our nation when bought at the price of our spiritual death, which must ultimately lead to the physical annihilation of our community?

Having stated the nature of the problem we must now try to search for a solution; but none seems to be forthcoming. We are on the horns of a dilemma: Either return to the Ghetto, or complete absorption. *Tertium non datur*! But of the two openings, the one is impossible, the other unacceptable. For we may recognize as clearly as possible the preserving influences of the Ghetto; we may, when made to shiver in a cold, big world, affectionately dream of its lowly roof, its narrow walls, its cheering fireside, its peaceful

atmosphere; but the Jews who have lived and grown in freedom can as little go back to the Ghetto as the grown bird can return to its eggshell. As for complete absorption, there are thousands among us—in itself the surest symptom of our decay—who coolly or even longingly look forward to this possibility. But to those of us who still feel the stream of Jewish life rolling through their veins, who are dominated and actuated by Jewish sentiment and Jewish thought, to whom Judaism is the breath of their nostrils and the fountain of their life, are struck with a terror that no words can describe at the mere possibility of their spiritual death, and every fibre of their being cries out aloud against a solution which strikes at their life of lives.

But is there really no escape from this frightful dilemma? Is there no hope for the Jews to participate in the life and the culture around them and yet remain Jewish? Is Judaism actually like a gas, which can only be kept by the grip of iron and evaporates when allowed to escape from its prison? Were it proved by the facts of our history, with its unparalleled store of experience, that union between Judaism and freedom is impossible, then our fate would be sealed, and all our protests and agonies would be of no avail. All that we should have to do would be to lie down in our shame, to wrap ourselves in our ignominy and to await with deathly stupor the verdict of nature. But, happily enough, our history does *not* prove it impossible. To be sure, the period in Jewish history preceding the era of emancipation was one of isolation, but this period was in its turn preceded by another, which was one of freedom. The great and glorious

Jewish-Arabic period deals a deathblow to the dilemma besetting the problem of Judaism, and is in itself an overwhelming proof and shining example of the compatibility of an active participation of the Jews in the life and culture of the nations around them, with a strong, vigorous, genuine development of Judaism.

The amount of freedom enjoyed by the Jews of the Arabic epoch was in no way inferior to that of our own. The Jews took an honorable and energetic part in the economic, social and political development of the Eastern, as well as the Western, Califate. We encounter among the Jews of that period men of affairs wielding a powerful influence in the public life of the country. We find Jewish merchants, Jewish financiers, Jewish dignitaries of high standing; and Jewish vizers and ministers of State are more frequently to be met with their than in our own times. The association with the culture and spiritual influences of the age was just as close and intimate. The Jews made themselves the possessors of all the intellectual achievements of Arabic civilization, with an eagerness and rapidity which reminds us vividly of our own days, and which found a curious echo in the outcry of a fanatic of the early part of that period, which sounds quite familiar to our own ears. "Every day,"—thus runs this lamentation which, characteristically enough, has a Karaite for its author and is written in Arabic, the language of the new culture—"every day we commit a number of sins and make ourselves guilty of a great many transgressions. We mix with the Gentiles around us and imitate their doings. Our chief aim is the study of the

Arabic language and its philology, on which we lavishly spend our money, while we leave aside the knowledge of the holy tongue and the meditation in the commandments of the Lord."[1] The intimate acquaintance of the Jews with the religion of Islam and its highly developed theology may be inferred from the fact that the religious terminology of the Jewish thinkers is largely patterned after that of the Mohammedan dogmatists, and that Moses is often designated by the same titles which were otherwise applied to Mohammed. The close connection of Judaism with the philosophy of the age, which, rooting in Greek thought, was far from favorable to positive religion, is illustrated by the fact that Aristotle was to the Jews of that period "*the* Philosopher" and was put on a level scarcely inferior to that of the Jewish Lawgiver.

Yet the very same age saw a development of the Jewish spirit and Jewish culture, so many-sided, so fascinating and so rich in results as never before or after in the lands of the exile. No department in the spiritual treasury of our people remained untouched by the loving care of its sons. Bible, Talmud, Hebrew literature, Hebrew poetry and philology, Jewish philosophy and everything that constitutes the pride of the Jew found their greatest and most brilliant representatives in that period, and th pro-e found attachment to Judaism went hand in hand with a noble enthusiasm for everything noble outside of Judaism. Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the powerful diplomat

[1] Compare the quotation in the treatise of the present writer entitled *Der Sprachgebrauch des Maimonides*, Introduction, p. XI, note 1.

of Cordova, was not only a generous supporter of every manifestation of Jewish learning, but took himself a most profound and stimulating interest in the rise of Hebrew philology in Spain. Samuel ibn Nagdela, the Prime Minister of Granada, guided not only the affairs of the State, but also the studies in the Beth Hamidrash, where he delivered lectures on the Talmud, and he is celebrated in Jewish history both as a Talmudic scholar and a Hebrew poet. Solomon Ibn Gabirol, who summed up the philosophy of the age in an Arabic work, which profoundly influenced mediaeval Christian philosophy, is one of the greatest poets of our nation in its sacred tongue. Moses Maimonides, who is a living expression of the whole Arabic culture of the age, is at the same t me the greatest scholar and thinker of post-Biblical Judaism, and while in his philosophical standard work, written in Arabic, he "guides the perplexed"of his time in the paths of Aristotelian philosophy, he leads in his religious code the large mass of his people "with a strong hand" to the sources of Judaism. Everywhere we witness harmony and beauty, a full, luxuriant growth of Judaism under the benign rays of freedom and culture.

Thus the great Jewish-Arabic period irrefutably shows that Judaism *is* compatible with freedom, and that a full participation in the life of the nations may very well be reconciled with a deep attachment to Judaism and a vigorous activity in its behalf. The same holds true of our own age. There is nothing in modern life or culture which is more opposed and more dangerous to Judaism than were the conditions of that era. Modern Christianity possesses no more

attraction for the adherents of Judaism than did the highly developed Muhammedan theology of that age, and modern thought is no more irreconcilable with the Judaism of the twentieth century than was the philosophy of Aristotle with the Judaism of the twelfth. But in confronting Judaism with the culture of the surrounding nations we must present it as it is, in its true shape and size, and not as a carricature. It was the fatal mistake of the period of emancipation, a mistake which is the real source of all the subsequent disasters in modern Jewish life, that, in order to facilitate the fight for political equality, Judaism was put forward not as a culture, as the full expression of the inner life of the Jewish people, but as a creed, as the summary of a few abstract articles of faith, similar in character to the religion of the surrounding nations. I said before that Judaism represents the inner characteristics of the Jewish people as manifested in its culture, in its mode of living and in its intellectual productivity. We only need recall the truism—almost too trivial to be repeated—that there is no exact equivalent for the term "religion" in Hebrew, or point to the well-known fact that, despite the aptitude of the Jewish mind for theological intricacies, the Jews were never reconciled to the idea of formulating a creed, to realize that Judaism is far more than a mere faith and that it is essentially different in its origin and structure from Christianity and similar religions. Forced on the Procrustes' couch of a religious denomination, and stripped of all those elements that bore special relation to the people that produced it, Judaism was crippled in its vital functions and rendered unfit to meet and to resist the new

conditions. Jewish living had to be sacrificed for the sake of emancipation. The beliefs of Judaism had to be refashioned so as to purge them of their intimate connection with the Jewish national aspirations. The progress of Judaism was no more an organic development from within, but a mere series of mechanic changes dictated by considerations from without. The whole structure of Judaism was thus turned top to bottom. Judaism became a church, the rabbis became priests and the Jews became a flock, not quite as tractable perhaps, though quite as ignorant as other flocks. The Jewish education of the children, which formed the corner-stone of Biblical and Talmudic Judaism, dwindled down to Sunday-school experiments, and the children of Israel often enough know of Judaism and their people no more than what they are told by Israel's enemies. Jewish scholarship, which, to an unequalled extent, was the possession of the rank and file of our nation, gave place to widespread ignorance, and the name *Am-Haaretz*, which in olden times disqualified a Jew for the humblest social position, almost became a title of honor. All those intellectual activities of Judaism which could not be pressed into the mould of theology, though of enormous value for the cultivation of the Jewish consciousness—activities which in Biblical times produced the Song of Songs and, in the Middle ages, gave birth to a highly developed literature and poetry—were thrown out of Jewish life, or, in the best case, confined to the cabinets of a few scholars.

Thus the modern Jew, while partaking of the fulness of modern culture, was made to starve within the

precincts of Judaism. He satisfied his highest tastes and desires outside the Jewish camp, while in Judaism he only perceived a few colorless doctrines, which could be had elsewhere, and a few cold liturgical ceremonies, which seldom appealed to him. He was often forced to ask himself, "Why am I a Jew?"—a question which, in its very form, implies a negation, and which, to our profound shame, was and still is heard from official representatives of Judaism in the pulpit.

To be sure, the picture I have just drawn applies only to certain sections of our people. "Israel is not yet forsaken, nor is Judah of his God, though their land be filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." Large numbers of our people still cling to Judaism with all their heart, their soul and their substance, and see in it the consummation of their lives. But we are no doubt on a slanting plane, and, unless we check ourselves in time and retrace our steps to the top, we shall roll down the precipice whence there is no return.

If, therefore, Judaism is to be preserved amidst the new conditions; if, lacking, as it does, all outward support, it is still to withstand the pressure of the surrounding influences, it must again break the narrow frame of a creed and resume its original function as a culture, as the expression of the Jewish spirit and the whole life of the Jews. It will not confine itself to a few metaphysical doctrines, which affect the head and not the heart, and a few official ceremonies, which affect neither the head nor the heart, but will encircle the whole life of the Jew and

give content and color to its highest functions and activities.

Perhaps two illustrations derived from historical facts, the one belonging to the Jewish-Arabic period, the other to our own age, will bring out more clearly than can any abstract exposition the different results of these two different conceptions of Judaism.

There is scarcely any civilization in which poetry, the rhythmic sentence and the rhymed word, occupies so prominent a place as in Arabic civilization and in the cultures dependent on it. All classes and occupations worshipped with equal devotion at its shrine. The starving nomad of the desert, the prince on the throne, the frivolous comedian and the grave scholar, all loved and practised the art of rhyme. It was the label of fashion, the touch-stone of genius, a source of income, and a fountain of delight. When the Jews came in contact with Arabic culture the only poetry they had created outside the Bible was the so-called *Piyyut*, a more or less uncouth form of poetry which merely served liturgical purposes. But the Judaism of that period, which embraced all that had any connection with Jewish life, soon took cognizance of the new factor. It introduced the form and spirit of Arabic poetry into the Hebrew language, and the mediaeval Hebrew poetry, the richest after the Biblical, sprang up, singing not only of God, His land and His people, but also of matters far less divine—of wine, woman, and all the moods and passions of the human heart. Moses Maimonides, who from his high metaphysical observatory looked down upon poetry as a meaningless waste of time, indignantly protested against the use, or abuse, of the

sacred tongue for contents of so frivolous a nature. But there can be no doubt that the secular Hebrew poetry, however slight its connection with Jewish religion, had as much share in attracting and attaching to Judaism the *beaux esprits* of the period as had Maimonides' metaphysics in keeping within the precincts of Judaism the philosophical skeptics of the age.

And now for our own time. There is scarcely anything in modern life which is so characteristic an expression of the soul of a people and so apt to arouse the emotions of its members as is music. The language of the angels, as it has been styled, has now become a means of expression of the whole of humanity. There is no nation, whether standing on the lowest or the highest rung of the ladder of civilization, which does not enshrine its joys and sorrows, its memories and hopes, in song and tune. The Jews have been blessed with an exceptional gift for this divine art. They have as composers and performers enriched the musical repertoire of almost every nation. Dozens of Jewish musicians, though keeping their Judaism in strict incognito, arrive every season in this country. But modern Judaism, which has curtailed its functions down to those of a creed, has no room for the talents of its children. And while even the hapless Ghetto has been able to breathe forth its woe in strains peculiar to it, modern Judaism, with all its freedom and prosperity, is deprived of this sweetest of arts, and even in its places of worship has to depend on the talents of non-Jews.

Such a Judaism of freedom and culture as advocated above will not be a mere reproduction of the

Judaism of the Ghetto. It will have to take in and digest the elements of other cultures, and will seek and meet new conditions and interests. This modern Judaism will evolve from the Judaism preceding it, as did Talmudic Judaism from Biblical, philosophical Judaism from Talmudism, Mysticism from Jewish philosophy, Hassidism from Rabbinism. It will develop and be modified along the lines of its history, prompted by inner necessity, not by dictation from without. While the Judaism of isolation accentuated the ceremonial side of Jewish life and crystalized itself by a natural process into an *Orah Hayyim*,—a "Mode of Living" (as the ceremonial part of the *Shulhan Arukh* is entitled),—the modern phase of Judaism will probably tend to emphasize more strongly its cultural aspects. While it will endeavor to preserve all those features of Jewish practice which give shape as well as color and vigor to Judaism, it will develop and call forth all those powers of the Jewish spirit which will be apt to supplement or counteract the influences of modern life. It will give full scope to our religious genius, but will also foster all other departments of the Jewish intellect. It will develop our literature, create or preserve Jewish art in all its functions, stimulate and further Jewish scholarship, so as to make it a powerful factor in the strengthening of the Jewish consciousness. It will reorganize and put on a firmer basis the Jewish eddcation of our children, who are the pledge of our future, and thus create the basis and sounding-board for all other Jewish activities. It will regulate our spiritual demand and supply, and will make Judaism

a living, flourishing, impregnable organism that deserves to be loved, to be respected, to be lived for.

If such a Judaism, presenting a harmonious union between the culture of the Jewish people and that of the other nations is possible in the Dispersion—and that it is possible is convincingly shown by our history—the only place where it has a full chance of realization is America. For America—this even the Zionist, who works and hopes for the establishment of a center of Jewish culture in its native land, will freely and readily admit—America is fast becoming the center of the Jewish people of the Diaspora. Jewish history teaches us that, despite the centrifugal forces of the Dispersion, Judaism was seldom without a center, and that this center, following the wanderings of Jewry, moved from place to place. The Jewish center shifted from Palestine to Babylon, from Babylon to Spain, from Spain to Poland and Russia. It is now shifting before our very eyes to this country. America is already the center of the Jews. As regards the number of its Jewish population it is second to none but to Russia, which is in a state of dissolution, and every steamship that anchors in our harbors increases our prospects for becoming first instead of second. But America has every chance of also becoming the center of Judaism, of the spiritual life of the Jewish people in the Dispersion, Those who are on the spot may, with the self-criticism so characteristic of our race, be slow or even reluctant to recognize it. People who stand in front of a painting and see mere blotches of greasy color are seldom able to realize the purport of the painting as a whole. But there is no thinking Jew outside of

America whose eyes are not turned towards this country as the center of Judaism in the nearest future. America presents a happy combination of so manifold and favorable circumstances as have seldom, if ever, been equalled in the history of the Diaspora. It has the numbers which are necessary for the creation of a cultural center. It possesses the economic prosperity indispensable for a successful spiritual development. The freedom enjoyed by the Jews is not the outcome of emancipation, purchased at the cost of national suicide, but the natural product of American civilization. The idea of liberty as evolved by the Anglo-Saxon mind does not merely mean, as it often does in Europe, the privilege of selling new clothes instead of old, but signifies liberty of conscience, the full, untrammelled development of the soul as well as the body. The true American spirit understands and respects the traditions and associations of other nationalities, and on its vast area numerous races live peaceably together, equally devoted to the interests of the land. The influx of Jewish immigrants in the past and present brought and brings to these shores the enormous resources of the Ghetto, and presents American Jewry with a variety of Jewish types which will be of far-reaching significance in its further development. In short, this country has at its disposal all the materials necessary for the upbuilding of a large, powerful center of Judaism, and it only depends on the American Jews whether these potentialities will ever become realities.

But it is to be hoped that the American Jews will not be forgetful of the task—as gigantic as it is honorable—which lies before them. He who feels

the pulse of American-Jewish life can detect, amidst numerous indications to the contrary, the beginnings of a Jewish renaissance, the budding forth of a new spirit. The Jews of America, as represented in their noblest and best, display larger Jewish sympathies, a broader outlook on Jewish life, a deeper understanding of the spiritual interests of Judaism than most of their brethren of the Mosaic persuasion in the lands of assimilation and emancipation. The type of the modern American Jew who is both modern and Jewish, who combines American energy and success with that manliness and self-assertion, which is imbibed with American freedom, is becoming a species, while in other countries the same characteristics are to be met with in but a few exceptional individuals. The American Jews are fully alive to the future of their country as a center of Jewish culture. They build not only hospitals and infirmaries, but also schools and colleges; they welcome not only immigrants, but also libraries; not only tradesmen and laborers, but also scholars and writers. Everywhere we perceive the evidence of a new life. To be sure, we are only at the beginning. Gigantic and complicated tasks confront us in the future. The enormous stores of latent Jewish energy that are formlessly piled up in this country will have to be transformed into living power. The dead capital which we constantly draw from the Ghetto will have to be made into a working capital to produce new values. We first of all have to lay our foundation: to rescue the Jewish education of our future generation from the chaos in which it is now entangled. But we are on the right road. The American Jews will take

to heart the lesson afforded by modern Jewish history in Europe. They will not bury Judaism in synagogues and temples, nor imprison it in charitable institutions. They will work and live for a Judaism which will compass all phases of Jewish life and thought; which will not be a faint sickly hot-house plant, but, as it was in the days of old, "a tree of life for those who hold it fast, bestowing happiness on those who cling to it."

But will a Judaism that does not confine itself to synagogues and hospitals, but endeavors to embrace the breadth and depth of modern life, leave sufficient room in the heart of the Jew for the interests and demands of his country, or, to put it into the mould of a current formula, is Judaism, and a Judaism of the kind advocated above, compatible with Americanism? The people who thus anxiously inquire betray a poor conception of human psychology. They seem to think that the souls of men are like those cheap musical slot-machines which can only play a single tune. The human soul is characterized not by uniformity but by variety. The higher a human type, the more multifarious its interests, the more manifold its activities, the more varied its affections. That a full and successful participation in all phases of American life is reconcilable with a deep attachment to Judaism in all its aspects is sufficiently warranted by the historical precedent of the Jewish-Arabic period. To be sure, in blending Judaism with Americanism the edges and corners will have to be levelled on both sides. Compromises will be unavoidable. But the happiest of marriages is a series of mutual compromises. These compromises may not be exactly

identical with those of the Jewish-Arabic era. Perhaps not all our Jewish dignitaries will be immersed in the niceties of Hebrew philology, like Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, and not all our ministers of State will be Talmudic lecturers and writers, like Samuel Ibn Nagdela. But these compromises will never be such as to obliterate or mutilate the character of either party. Judaism and Americanism will not be intersecting, but concentric circles. In the great palace of American civilization we shall occupy our own corner, which we will decorate and beautify to the best of our taste and ability, and make it not only a center of attraction for the members of our family, but also an object of admiration for all the dwellers of the palace.

There is an old rabbinic saying to the effect that after the destruction of the Temple the gift of prophecy passed over to children and fools. I am not young enough to claim the privilege of a child, nor am I modest enough to use the pretext of a fool. True, prophecy without inspiration, which predicts the future as a matter of fact, is childish and foolish, because no human eye can perceive and no human mind can calculate the innumerable and imponderable effects of the concatenation of human events. But prophecy as a matter of hope, the prediction of the future not as it will be, but as it ought to be, is indispensable for all those who have, or desire to have, a clear conception of their duties towards the coming generations. And when we thus try to penetrate the mist that encircles the horizon of the present, a vision unfolds itself before our mind's eye, presenting a picture of the future American Israel. We perceive a

community great in numbers, mighty in power, enjoying life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: true life, not mere breathing space; full liberty, not mere elbow room; real happiness, not that of pasture beasts; actively participating in the civic, social and economic progress of the country, fully sharing and increasing its spiritual possessions and acquisitions, doubling its joys, halving its sorrows; yet deeply rooted in the soil of Judaism, clinging to its past, working for its future, true to its traditions, faithful to its aspirations, one in sentiment with their brethren wherever they are, attached to the land of their fathers as the cradle and resting place of the Jewish spirit; men with straight backs and raised heads, with big hearts and strong minds, with no conviction crippled, with no emotion stifled, with souls harmoniously developed, self-centred and self-reliant; receiving and resisting, not yielding like wax to every impress from the outside, but blending the best they possess with the best they encounter; not a horde of individuals, but a set of individualities, adding a new note to the richness of American life, leading a new current into the stream of American civilization; not a formless crowd of taxpayers and voters, but a sharply marked community, distinct and distinguished, trusted for its loyalty, respected for its dignity, esteemed for its traditions, valued for its aspirations, a community such as the Prophet of the Exile saw it in his vision: "And marked will be their seed among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples. Everyone that will see them will point to them as a community blessed by the Lord."

XVI

THE PROBLEM OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN AMERICA*

THE first systematic attempt to deal with the problem of Jewish education in America in its various phases is of recent origin.

In order to realize the magnitude of the problem and the peculiar difficulties which constantly present themselves in coping with it, it is necessary to take a larger view of our topic and to inquire into the general historical and cultural conditions which have brought about the present educational situation in American Jewry and the remarkable complications connected with it.

Our inquiry must naturally begin with the history and composition of American Jewry as it is constituted at present.

The Jewry of America is the product of three successive waves of immigration, which may be designated as the Spanish, the German, and the Russian.

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*First published in the *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year ended June* 30, 1913 (Department of the Interior. Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.), under the title "The Problem of Jewish Education in America and the Bureau of Education of the Jewish Community of New York City." The latter part of this article, dealing with the Bureau of Education, has been omitted, as most of the facts contained therein are now antiquated.

The first Jews who came to this country were descendants of those who had been exiled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, the year in which America was discovered. They came to this country principally by way of central and southern America. For reasons which need not detain us here, their numbers have gradually decreased; and, while there still exist, as a monument to their past glory, a few of their congregations with attached schools, and though a number of them still take an active and honorable part in American Jewish affairs, they have yielded their predominant influence to the more recent settlers and represent no distinct phase of the Jewish problem. Very recently a new immigration of so-called Spanish Jews, proceeding from the Turkish Empire and the Balkans, has been wending its course to this country and is slowly forcing itself upon the attention of Jewish workers and educators, but it is not yet of sufficient importance to affect the general aspect of Jewish life or Jewish education.

The second wave of Jewish immigration came from Germany, principally from the south of Germany, and, outside of a number of individuals who came early in colonial times, extended over four decades, between the years 1830 and 1870. It began as a result of the distress caused by the Napoleonic wars and reached its climax in consequence of the revolutionary upheavels in central Europe in 1848.

To appreciate the educational standards and ideas which these settlers brought with them, and which they subsequently tried to adapt to their new environment, we must bear in mind that the majority of these

immigrants came from rural communities, for the Jews of Germany of that period lived to a far greater extent on the land than they do at present. The great cultural reform inaugurated by Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), which in a surprisingly short time had pushed the German Jews from the isolated recesses of their ghettoes to the forefront of European civilization, did not have the same revolutionizing and frequently disintegrating effect upon the smaller communities. Yet it succeeded in conquering their deep-seated prejudice against secular education. The Jews even in the smaller communities spoke the same language (though often with a slight dialectic modification), wore the same dress, and were, above all, molded by the same education as their fellow Germans; and they lived, on the whole, on friendly terms with their non-Jewish neighbors. As far as Judaism is concerned, they were, with rare exceptions, strictly orthodox, loyal to the teachings of their ancestral religion and staunch in the observance of its practices. Their Jewish educational standards were simple, like their conditions of life. The reading of the Hebrew prayers, a fair acquaintance with the Five Books of Moses in the original, with a few selections from the other books of the Bible, a working knowledge of the Jewish ritual, and, as a token of particular excellence, a glimpse into post-biblical Hebrew literature, exhausted the educational ambitions of these simple-minded, but staunch-hearted Jewish immigrants.

The impetus which drove the German Jews to these shores was not a sudden outbreak, but a slow

and steady process, and their immigration proceeded in a similar manner. Settling at a time when the opportunities in this country were many, the German Jewish immigrants, who combined German industry and love of discipline with Jewish sobriety and intelligence, made rapid strides and attained influence and prosperity. They found it comparatively easy to reproduce their religious and educational institutions in the new environment. Their religious life centered around their newly established congregations, which, as a result of their love of order and their marked organizing ability, soon became flourishing institutions. Their educational demands were supplied by the so-called congregational school which was connected with the congregation and was generally under the supervision of its rabbi.[1]

Another educational factor was soon added in the form of the Sunday School, so called because the instruction there was limited to Sunday mornings. The Sunday school was originally independent of the congregation, although this changed considerably in the later course of development.[2] Such a school was

[1] Some of the earliest Jewish schools established in this country supplied at the same time a secular education. A few schools founded subsequently by Russian Jews on a similar parochial plan are still in existence today. But as they are too few to affect the problem of Jewish education as a whole, they have been left out of account in the present sketch.

[2] At present most Jewish Sunday schools are connected with congregations, mostly of the reform type. "Congregational Schools" are now usually those which are connected with congregations of a more conservative type and hold more than one session a week.

founded as early as 1838 in Philadelphia, largely in cooperation with the Spanish Jewish element; and the progress of this type of educat onal institution may fairly be gauged from the fact that the school just mentioned has gradually grown into an association which, at its seventy-fifth anniversary (March 2, 1913), maintained in that city thirteen schools, with more than 4,000 children.

The problem of Jewish education as affecting this section of American Jewry was still more simplified by the advent of the so-called Jewish reform movement, which was introduced from Germany after 1850. Under its influence most of the Jewish religious ceremonies were abolished and the role of Hebrew as a religious medium was considerably diminished. Jewish education, thus freed from its heaviest burden, was confined practically to a general acquaintance with the Hebrew prayers still retained in the reformed liturgy, an exposition of the Jewish principles of faith and a smattering of Jewish history.

The generosity and spirit of organization which, aided by greater prosperity, are so admirably displayed in the philanthropic institutions of this section of the American Jewish community have also, though to a lesser extent, manifested themselves in their educational endeavors. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the two largest organizations of Reform Judaism, have given, particularly in the last few years, a great deal of attention to the problem of Jewish education. The former organization has established a synagogue and school extension depart-

ment; it is also interested, in conjunction with the latter organization, in the publication of Jewish textbooks.

An attempt to organize the Jewish Sunday schools in the eastern States was recently made in New York. The Jewish Chautauqua Society, founded in 1893 by Dr. Henry Berkowitz, for the dissemination of Jewish religious knowledge is developing a widespread activity, which includes schoolwork, though its emphasis is directed toward the Jewish youth of a more mature age.

In this connection mention should also be made of other educational institutions, which, though largely called forth by the later influx of the Russian immigrants and primarily designed for their benefit, yet owe their origin to the generosity and organizing ability of the German Jews. Such institutions, serving partly other purposes than those of primary Jewish education, are the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (founded in 1875) and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York (founded in 1886, reorganized in 1902) for the training of rabbis, the two teacher's institutes subsequently founded under the respective auspices of these two colleges, the Gratz College of Philadelphia founded in 1875 also for the training of Jewish teachers, the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning (founded in 1907) for postgraduate studies and a few other agencies for the propagation of Jewish knowledge, which may be left out of consideration in this sketch.

Fundamentally different both in its causes and consequences was the third wave of Jewish immigra-

tion. It is generally designated as the Russian, because the majority of the immigrants of this class came from the Russian Empire, including Poland. It must, however, be added that this wave includes, as well, the large Jewish centers bordering on Russia, such as Galicia, Roumania, and, to a lesser extent, Hungary—in short, that part of Europe which, on account of its cultural status, has been cleverly dubbed "Semi-Asia".

In spite of the slow and grinding pressure of economic misery and political discrimination, to which the Russian Jews had long been subjected, the Jewish immigration from Russia, with a few exceptions, started only after 1882, as an immediate result of the massacres and of the anti-Jewish restrictions which inaugurated the reign of Czar Alexander III. When the immigration broke out, it did so, in contradistinction from the German-Jewish immigration, with the force of a volcanic eruption. It was also volcanic as regards its numbers, for, while the German-Jewish immigration affected but a part of German Jewry, which altogether amounts to half a million, the immigration from Russia and the adjoining countries drew on a population of no less than eight millions. The vastness and suddenness of this exodus determined to a large extent the fate of the new settlers. For they naturally drifted toward large centers, and, in consequence, both the problem of Judaism and the problem of Jewish education assumed an essentially different and a far more complicated character.

But much more even than by these external factors

was the problem of Jewish education among these newcomers determined by their religious and cultural make-up, which was vastly different from that of the German Jews. The complete cultural and social isolation in which the Jews of Poland and Russia had lived for centuries continued practically undisturbed till very recently. The influence of the Mendelssohnian movement in Germany, which penetrated even into Russia, affected but a thin layer of Russian Jewry, and the far more extensive and far more radical disturbances in present-day Russian Jewry have not as yet asserted themselves sufficiently to affect seriously the problem of Jewish education in this country.

The strict isolation in which, owing to a variety of historic causes, the Jews of the Polish Kingdom had lived for centuries was even more accentuated when Poland came under the sway of Russia. For, by confining the Jews to the Pale of Settlement and furthermore excluding them from the villages in that area, the Russian Government drove them into the congested towns and cities, in which they often formed the overwhelming majority of the population. They lived in complete segregation from their neighbors, and the non-Jews were as much of a puzzle to the Jews as the latter were to the non-Jews. The terrible economic and political misery to which the Russian Jews were condemned made them look upon the whole non-Jewish population as their natural enemies, which in reality they were; and in their despair they clung more fondly than ever to the soothing comfort and uplifting influence of Jewish life and

doctrine. General secular education was at a low ebb in Russia; it was certainly far inferior both in extent and intensity to Jewish educational requirements. Yet even these meagre educational advantages were withheld from the Jews; and when in a whim of despotic generosity, as happened several times in the course of the nineteenth century, the Russian Government decided to draw, or rather to drag, the Jews to the fountain of secular education it was—by no means, unjustifiably—suspected by them as an effort to land them in the fold of the Greek Orthodox Church. No wonder, therefore, that the Jews of Russia anxiously shunned all general education and lived their own life. They used their own language (Yiddish as a vernacular and Hebrew as a cultural medium); they wore their own dress, and were in every manifestation of life Jews, and nothing but Jews.

Now the cap and corner stone of Russian Jewish life was religion—religion as taught by the Bible and interpreted and embodied in definite practices and institutions by post-biblical or rabbinical Judaism. To rabbinical Judaism, however, even more so than to biblical Judaism, religion is inseparable from two fundamental aspects. It is, on the one hand, not merely a matter of faith, forming a set of abstract beliefs, but a complete system of living which embraces the most significant and the least significant functions in practical life. It is, on the other hand, a matter of knowledge and intellectual endeavor. Hence, practical piety and religious knowledge, or scholarship, formed and still form the Boaz and Jachin of old-

fashioned Russian Jewish life. In this connection we are particularly interested in the second factor, and it may be said without exaggeration that at no time during the long duration of Jewish history and in no place throughout the world-wide extent of the Jewish Diaspora has this great intellectual ideal of rabbinical Judaism, which nearly 2,000 years ago crystallized itself in a comprehensive system of primary and secondary education, been so intensely developed and so completely realized as in Russian Jewish life.

To those who can not fall back upon their own personal recollections it is difficult to convey even remotely the tremendous importance of this intellectual or educational factor among the Jews of Russia. Russian Jewry presented the unique spectacle of a community in which the social stratification was solely determined by knowledge or intellectual achievement, whose whole energy, unaffected by economic considerations and undiverted by the need of recreation or even solicitude for physical well-being, was fiercely concentrated on the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. The ideal type of Russian Jewish life was the *Lamden*, the scholar. The highest ambition of the Russian Jew was that his sons, and if he had only daughters, that his sons-in-law should be scholars, and the greatest achievement of a man's life was his ability to provide sufficiently for them, so that, relieved from economic cares, they might devote themselves unrestrictedly to Jewish learning. As a well-known scholar thoughtfully puts it, among the Jews of Poland and Russia there was no learned

estate, not because there were no scholars, but because the people itself was a nation of students.[1] To be sure, this learning was one-sided. Yet it was both wide and deep, for it embraced the almost boundless domains of religious Hebrew literature, and involved the knowledge of one of the most complicated systems of law and profound theological doctrines. The knowledge of the Hebrew prayers and of the Five Books of Moses, which, as we have seen, was the objective of German Jewish education, would not have been sufficient to save the Russian Jew from the most terrible opprobrium—that of being an *Am-Haaretz*, an ignoramus. The ability to understand a Talmudic text, which demands years of preparation, was the minimum requirement for one who wanted to be of any consequence in the community.[2] It is obvious, therefore, that these religious ideals and educational

[1] Prof. L. Ginzberg, The Jewish Primary School (reprint m the *Jewish Exponent*, Philadelphia, 1907), p. 5.

[2] The educational standards of Russian Jewish life may perhaps be best illustrated by an anecdote which was told to the writer by a friend. The latter, a native of southern Russia, in which the standards of Jewish education are somewhat lower, was traveling through Lithuania, which is, on the contrary, known for its high educational level. A Jewish coachman by whom this gentleman was driven was muttering something in Hebrew. On being asked whether he was reciting the Psalms (which are generally recited by the lower Jewish classes in Russia), the coachman indignantly retorted: "In your country they may be satisfied with knowing the Psalms; I am reciting the Mishnah!" The Mishnah is a code of law (civil, criminal, and ritual) upon which the Talmud is based. Imagine in any other country or nation a driver reciting by heart, let us say, the Justinian Code!

standards of Russian Jewish life were bound to call forth a distinct set of educational institutions designed to preserve and advance these ideals and standards.

We shall now proceed to describe in brief the educational agencies of Russian Jewry. For the difficulty of the problem of American Jewish education largely consists in the fact that it is both determined and hampered by these models. Before describing them, however, we wish to call attention to four general characteristics which attach to all of them and have left their impress upon their educational reproductions in this country.

First, general education being completely neglected, Jewish religious education in Russia took, as far as time and attention are concerned, the place of general education. *Second*, Russian Jewish life being completely barred from a normal physical and economic development, these institutions paid no attention whatsoever to hygienic requirements or the demands of economic life. *Third*, on account of the marked individualism of the Russian Jew and the lack of organizing ability produced by the life in the ghetto, these educational institutions were never formed into a system, but remained with practically no exception disconnected, individual undertakings. *Fourth*, owing to a variety of historic causes, the Jewish woman was expected to limit herself to the religious life in the home and was almost entirely barred from the domain of Jewish religious knowledge.

The first and most important educational factor in Russian Jewish life was, as it is and should be everywhere—the home. From the very dawn of its

consciousness, the child was made familiar with the Jewish religious practices, and taught to pronounce, or, more correctly, to prattle the short Hebrew prayers and benedictions which Judaism prescribes for drink and food and all occasions of life. Perhaps, more than by all descriptions this tendency may be illustrated by the fact that Russian Jewish legend admiringly narrates of some of its saints, that, while still being nursed (children in Russia used to be nursed very late), they were able to pronounce the Hebrew blessing over the milk which they drew from their mothers' breasts.

When the boy was five years old (sometimes even earlier) he was sent to the *heder* (a Hebrew word designating "room," in all probability originally the room in which the teacher lived). The heder, which is a very ancient Jewish institution, was, at least as far as Russia is concerned, not a communal institution, but a private school with a comparatively small number of children, ranging from fifty to as few as four.

The heder may be subdivided into two kinds:

First, the elementary heder in which the following subjects were taught: *Ivre*, or Hebrew reading, for which the prayer book served as a textbook, and *Humesh*, or the Five Books of Moses (later with commentaries). Characteristically enough, the child began with the Third Book of Moses, dealing with the complicated system of Jewish sacrifices and laws.

Second, the advanced heder, in which the study of the Talmud (with only an occasional reading of the Bible) formed the main object of instruction. Jewish

history, or even Biblical history, or the systematic teaching of religion and ethics was neglected, largely because Talmudic literature was thought to offer, though in a disconnected manner, sufficient material for both.

The hygienic condition of the heder which consisted, as indicated by the name, of a single room in which the teacher lived, often with a large family, was depressing. The hours of study were inconceivably long, from eight in the morning to eight in the evening in the elementary heder, and from seven in the morning to nine or even ten in the evening in the advanced heder. In the latter, in addition, a part or the whole of Thursday night was devoted to a review of the ground covered during the week. There were neither examinations nor graduations nor prizes, such stimuli being unnecessary, because of the universal reverence for Jewish knowledge and its representatives.

The heder, in which the boy remained till about his fifteenth year,[1] was supplemented by two higher institutions of learning. First was the *beth hamidrash* ("House of Interpretation, or Study"), a curious institution which probably has no parallel in the life of any other nation. It was a building, such as was found even in the smallest Jewish community, which served not only as a house of prayer, but also as a sort of public library in which the Jewish residents spent daily a few hours of study and pious meditation

[1] The age of attendance at the various Jewish schools differed somewhat in the different parts of Russia. The difference in this as well as in other points was greatest between Lithuania and Poland.

and which was at the same time a place of recreation, such as recreation was in Russian Jewish life. Above all, it was a place in which the Russian Jewish youths, without any guidance and left completely to themselves, continued, in literal fulfillment of the Biblical injunction (Joshua i, 8), to meditate in the Law day and night, for they often spent there their scanty hours of night rest.

The other alternate institution of higher learning was the *yeshibah* or Talmudic academy. This type of institution, which was particularly prevalent in Lithuania, was generally founded by some famous rabbinical authority and was maintained, as were also its students who were counted by the hundreds and even by the thousands, by the generous donations of the whole community. There the Jewish youths, under some sort of systematic guidance, which, however, made full allowance for Russian Jewish individualism, explored no less assiduously the vast domains of Jewish lore.

Neither in the beth hamidrash nor in the yeshibah was there a definite system of promotion or graduation. Those who were particularly successful in their advanced studies received from some celebrated authority the rabbinical diploma, the most coveted distinction in Russian Jewish life, which, however, was by no means always put to practical use. Those who were less successful were satisfied to be educated laymen. From his status as a student, the Russian Jewish youth passed directly into the estate of matrimony, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and, being

without the slightest knowledge of life or business, went to swell the mass of struggling humanity.

One more institution which in Russian Jewish life was least important, but when transferred to American soil became of unexpected significance, must be mentioned in this connection. The heder, as was pointed out above, was a private school, and the teacher who kept it depended on his tuition fee for a livelihood. For, poor as the Russian Jews were, they seldom considered themselves poor enough to forego the privilege of paying for the religious instruction of their children. "Though you have to secure the means by begging, be sure to provide for the instruction of your children in the Torah," is a dying father's admonition to his children.[1] But for those children who were fatherless, or whose parents could under no circumstances afford the tuition fee, every community maintained a public school called *Talmud Torah* ("Study of the Law") in which the elements of Judaism were imparted. In spite of the fact, or perhaps owing to the fact, that these schools were under the supervision of the Jewish community, they were the least successful and least esteemed type of educational institution. Only the poorest of the poor and those that formed the very dregs of Russian Jewish society availed themselves of this educational agency.

The educational institutions, as outlined above, suffered no doubt from many serious, nay fundamental defects, and they have often been subjected, particu-

[1] Compare L. Ginzberg, Jewish Primary School, p. 14.

larly by those who passed over to secular education, to violent and even passionate criticism. Yet, on cool reflection, one must admit that they were thoroughly successful, for they fulfilled the purpose for which they were created, which was to perpetuate the peculiar ideals of the Russian Jewish community. And much as we may feel inclined and, indeed, are forced to condemn them when applying modern standards, we must not overlook the great fact that, largely through their instrumentality, one of the most unfortunate sections of humanity, ground by indescribable poverty and crushed by the heavy hand of an unfriendly Government, has become and still remains one of the most intellectually alert and one of the most anxious, nay greedy, for the light of knowledge and intellectual advancement.

No particular penetration or study is necessary to realize the terrible chaos in which the Russian Jewish immigrants found themselves when, on touching these hospitable shores, they were confronted by the completely different, nay diametrically opposite conditions of American life. The whole elaborate structure of Russian Jewish life seemed to tumble down like a card house on the first touch with American reality. Everything in the new environment, the radically different standards and ideals of a highly industrialized community, the political freedom, the utterly different attitude of the neighboring population, the demands of general education which characteristically enough the Russian Jew immediately accepted as a matter of course, although in his native land he had shunned them, and at the top, and per-

haps at the bottom of it all, the fierce economic struggle of the newcomers with the infinitely greater prospects of success which it held forth for them—all these circumstances were equally bound to revolutionize their time-honored ideas and ideals. America was to them, in the literal sense of the word, a new world, new not only geographically, but also economically, socially, politically, and religiously, new in every manifestation of life; and it is no exaggeration to say that in no other class of immigrants, not even among those from the Far East, has the painful process of adaptation assumed such tragic complications as among the Russian Jews. For, having no land or Government to fall back upon, they come to this country with the intention to stay, and with the genuine desire to become part and parcel of this Republic. No wonder, therefore, that many of the immigrants, realizing the hopelessness of adapting Judaism (the Judaism such as they knew it) to the new environment, threw up their hands in despair and left the growing generation to their fate. The result was that within a few years there was created a gulf between parents and children which could no more be bridged, and which is undoubtedly the source of the innumerable tragedies in the inner life of the Russian Jews in this country.

There were others, however, who, with heavy hearts and hoping against hope, decided to make a stand for what they rightly considered to be their most sacred duty as Jews. But not knowing how to modify their old traditional standards in accordance with the new conditions, they proceeded to

reproduce the religious and educational institutions of Russian Jewish life exactly in the same form which they had had in the "old country." This disastrous policy was, in part, encouraged by the attempt of the earlier Jewish settlers, the so-called German Jews to Americanize the newcomers. Well-meant and prompted by generous motives as these endeavors no doubt were, they probably did more harm than good. For, instead of trying to preserve all that was valuable in the mental make-up of the Russian Jew —and much of it was of high and lasting value, even in the new environment—and, instead of adapting it gently and cautiously to the new conditions, these endeavors, rudely ignoring the peculiar individuality of the Russian Jew, proceeded to hammer it by force into the mould of American life. No wonder then that they sometimes resulted in making the Russian Jew reject all that was valuable in his own culture and adopt that which was superficial and least valuable in the new culture. As a consequence, the Russian Jews learned to look askance at all these attempts at Americanization, much as they favored Americanization in itself, and they refused to accept even those modifications of Jewish life which might have proved beneficial for the preservation of Judaism in this country.

Left then to their own resources, the Russian Jewish immigrants endeavored to reproduce the religious, and what interests us here particularly, the educational agencies of Russian Jewish life. But, with all their loyalty to their traditions, it was obvious that a complete reproduction was impossible. The

downfall of the central pillar that had supported the structure of Russian Jewish life, the ideal of religious knowledge or scholarship, involved the downfall of all those institutions which had served it. Hence the beth hamidrash and the yeshibah were doomed from the beginning, and, though attempts at reproducing them have been made, they did not yield any tangible results. Even the advanced heder, which had for its purpose the difficult study of the Talmud, had no place in the new surroundings, in which the best energy of the growing generation was requisitioned either for general education or for the economic struggle. As a result, only the elementary heder and the Talmud Torah, the two institutions which limited themselves to imparting the fundamentals of Judaism, came to the forefront, and these institutions became the more important, since, on account of the economic struggle and other causes, the Jewish home which had always been the power house of the Jewish religion lost much of its influence as an educational factor among the Jewish people.

We now understand the reason why the heder became, and indeed has remained, a favorite institution among the Russian Jewish immigrants. According to recent calculations, there are about 1,000 heders in this country, with an annual budget of about $600,000; half of them are found in New York City. Yet, no one, not even among the most optimistic or most orthodox, doubts that the heder is a complete failure in America. Its inherent defects, which in the atmosphere of Russian Jewish life were already

noticeable but bearable, are a terrible anomaly in the new environment. The long hours of study, which were an indispensable condition of their success in Russia, are impossible in this country in which the public school claims the best time and energy of the child. The unhygienic and even repulsive external condition of the heder, which was scarcely felt in Russia, has had the inevitable result to make the instruction imparted in it repulsive to the American child, who judges it by the standards of the public school. From these facts alone, not to speak of other numerous causes, it is obvious and is indeed admitted on all hands that the heder has no chance whatsoever and does not even offer the possibility of improvement.

An unexpected development was in store for the last type of Russian Jewish educational agencies—the Talmud Torah. This institution which occupied the lowest rung in the educational ladder is gradually climbing to the top. The success of the Talmud Torah is mainly due to the fact that it is a large school and as such is better fitted to cope with the large numbers in the congested Jewish centers, and is at least potentially able to adopt and adapt the methods and externalities of the American public school. The first Talmud Torah in New York City was founded in the early eighties, but with all its potentialities this type of school has not yet fully worked out. The Talmud Torah in this country was originally designed, as had been the case in Russia, to accommodate the poor children who could not pay, and it has not yet fully emancipated itself from this

objectionable character as a charitable institution. Demanding a large budget, which can only be obtained by organized effort, these institutions are far from meeting the educational situation, not to speak of the numerous internal evils to which reference will be made later. It is enough to point out the dry fact that of the 200,000 Jewish school children at present in New York only 11,000 are taught in Talmud Torahs.[1]

After what was said of the position of woman in Jewish education in Russia it will scarcely be necessary to add that until very recently practically no provision was made for the religious instruction of the girls, although it is conceded by all that in this country the Jewish woman is destined to play an important role in Jewish religious life.

The above facts clearly show that, in spite of all educational endeavors, which, in view of the extraordinary difficulties confronting them, rather deserve our praise than our criticism, the problem of Jewish education, which has been enormously complicated by the third and largest Jewish immigration to America, is further from its solution than it had ever been before. A few figures will illustrate the magnitude of the problem. The last census of Jewish institutions was made in 1908, and was presented in the "American Jewish Year Book" for that year. Analyzing the data bearing on Jewish education, Dr. S. Benderly, of whom more will be said hereafter, arrived at the following figures which, of course, will have to be modified according to the steady increase in the

[1For the latest figures compare the works quoted in the footnote on the next page.]

numbers of the Jewish population.[1] Counting the Jewish population of the United States as 1,800,000, he estimated the number of Jewish school children in 1908 at 360,000. Of these, 26,560 received instruction in 235 Sunday schools with one session weekly; 9,551 were taught in 92 congregational schools with two, very seldom three, sessions weekly; and 26,216 attended 236 daily schools (Talmud Torahs). The number of boys taught in heders (for which no data were available), including those who received private instruction at home, was computed by Dr. Benderly to be roughly 40,000. The total number of children then, who in 1908 received Jewish religious instruction, amounted altogether to about 100,000; so that fully 260,000, among them probably 170,000 girls, were left without any religious instruction whatsoever. Taking into consideration that none of these types of schools admittedly came up to the educational standards, even as modified in this country, the terrible significance of these figures from the religious point of view becomes apparent.

But not only from the religious point of view. The lack of all religious instruction and consequently of all religious idealism, the inevitable weakening of

[1] See his article "Jewish Education in America," in the *Jewish Exponent* (Philadelphia), January 17, 1908. [The latest figures will be found in the account of the Jewish educational agencies in New York City, which appeared in the *Jewish Communal Register of New York City* for 1917-1918, p. 349ff. A very elaborate and valuable presentation of the entire problem is contained in Dr. Alexander M. Dushkin's book on "Jewish Education in New York City," published by the Bureau of Jewish Education, New York, 1918.]

moral self-restraint which threatens to result from it, the terrible cleavage between parents and children, and the consequent loss of parental authority which has thus been brought about, the materialization of Jewish life, which is in crying contrast to all Jewish traditions and is particularly dangerous in an environment with a highly developed industrial life, all these facts, added to the natural solicitude for the preservation of Judaism, could not fail to arrest the attention of all those who were seriously interested in the welfare of the Jewish community in America.

Numerous symptoms heralded this awakening of American Jews to one of the prime necessities of Jewish life. For the first time, in several large cities systematic endeavors were made to collect educational statistics as the first step to cope with the problem. A number of new Talmud Torahs were established. At the graduation exercises of the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1905, its president, Professor Solomon Schechter, emphasized the fact that, while several higher institutions of learning had been founded to provide education for the few (for one out of one thousand), no adequate provision was made for the nine hundred and ninety-nine remaining; and the same fact was dwelt upon on the same occasion by Dr. Cyrus Adler. Shortly afterwards, through the munificence of Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, the Teachers' Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a similar institution, under the auspices of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, were established. In New York City the various Talmud Torahs, among which there had been no cooperation whatsoever, made an attempt, though

it remained a platonic one, to organize a Central Board of Talmud Torahs.

It goes without saying that, difficult and extensive as was the problem of Jewish education throughout the country, it was nowhere more difficult and more extensive than in New York City. For New York City contains almost one-half of American Jewry and forms the port of entry where the immigrant comes for the first time face to face with the conditions of the new environment. The Jewry of New York, indeed, presents, on account of its vast and congested population, unique problems of religious organization. The religious and educational chaos, which, as was indicated above, was the inevitable result of a chaotic immigration, was greater here than elsewhere. It was therefore, natural that the first attempt to cope with this situation should be made in New York. In 1909 a large number of Jewish organizations formed the Jewish Community (Kehillah) of New York City for the purpose of religious organization, under the chairmanship of Dr. J. L. Magnes. It is a significant fact that one of the very first steps of the new organization was to investigate the status of religious education in New York City. Already at the first convention of the Community (February 26 and 27, 1910) Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan, the then chairman of the Committee on Education, presented the results of this investigation, which made a deep impression. He showed that, out of a computed Jewish school population of 170,000 (in 1909), only 41,404 were taught in some kind of Jewish educational institution—of these almost a

third (13,532) went to heders—while, even if allowance be made for those taught privately at home. two-thirds were left without a knowledge of Judaism and its religious institutions. Professor Kaplan summed up his report in the following discouraging sentences:

> 1. The demand for Jewish education is comparatively small.[1] 2. Small as the demand is, the means and equipment which we possess at present are far too inadequate to meet it. 3. Wherever that demand is met, there is a lack of system or of content.

Fortunately this educational inquiry aroused more than fruitless apprehensions. At the same convention of the Jewish Community the chairman, Dr. J. L. Magnes, was able to announce that Mr. Jacob H. Schiff had donated the sum of $50,000 to be distributed over five years for the purpose of improving and promoting Jewish religious primary education in New York City; and soon afterwards a sum of $25,000 was added by the New York Foundation[2] for the same purpose.

Having obtained these gifts, Dr. Magnes addressed himself to Dr. S. Benderly, a Jewish pedagogue in Baltimore, for an expression of opinion as to the best use of these funds.

The inquiry of Dr. Magnes was answered by Dr. Benderly in a statement which subsequently appeared as Bulletin No. 1 of the Jewish Community of New

[1] This is no doubt explained by the fact that the Jewish population had no confidence in the hitherto established educational institutions.

[2] The New York Foundation is made up of a legacy of the late Mr. Heinsheimer for educational and social purposes.

York City. Since the ideas contained in this statement became afterwards the guiding principles of the Jewish Bureau of Education, the following sentences may be quoted as illustrating the attitude of this organization toward the problem from the very beginning:

> Never before in Jewish history has so large a Jewish community as we form in this country had both the opportunity and the responsibility of proving that the essentials of Judaism, so far from being in contradiction to the cardinal elements of modern civilization, are complementary to them, the two sides being mutually indispensable to each other. Constituting an integral part of the Republic, we are under obligation to demonstrate that the principles for which Israel fought and bled over two thousand years are perfectly compatible with and essential to the fundamental principles upon which the American nation is building a wonderful structure of human liberty and happiness. Our obligation is twofold. On the one hand, we must Americanize, in the higher sense, every Jew in this country, infusing into him the spirit of self-reliance, fair play, and social co-operation; and, on the other hand, we must build up the structure of Jewish life, so as not only to enable ourselves to hold our own, Jewishly speaking, but also to become an indispensable element in the progress of the country.
>
> As the great public school system is the rock bottom upon which this country is rearing its institutions, so we Jews must evolve here a system of Jewish education that shall be complementary to and harmonious with the public system.

Speaking of the practical difficulties of the problem Dr. Benderly continues:

> First looms up what I would call the hygienic phase of Jewish religious education. We have to deal with children that spend practically the entire day in the public schools, and come to the Hebrew school fatigued both in body and mind. This is the fact that has given birth to the Jewish Sun-

> day school, and now the more serious students and well-wishers of the Sunday school system realize that, because of the limited time at its disposal, it has no future. On the other hand, the Talmud torahs and chadarim (heders) confine weary children for two hours or more daily, which is undoubtedly detrimental to the health of the children; and the Jews living in congested areas, in New york in particular, can ill afford to invite a curtailing of vitality. The question at once arises: Is it possible to work out a course of religious instruction that shall enable us to reduce the number of hours needed for Hebrew instruction by half, and that shall at the same time be exhilarating enough to evoke a response from tired children?

Discussing the financial phase of the problem, Dr. Benderly pointed out[1] that to provide school buildings for the Jewish school population of New York would demand an investment of $16,000 000, an annual expenditure of $3,000,000 for teaching, an army of 3,000 teachers, not to speak of the annual increase of 8,000 children, who would demand an additional annual investment in school buildings of $640,000, an additional annual outlay of $120,000 for teaching, and an additional annual supply of 200 teachers. The mere magnitude of this phase of the educational problem makes it clear that our hope lies with the people themselves, and that the parents must support the schools. Dr. Benderly, therefore, suggested that the fund placed at the disposal of the Jewish Community should not be spent in propping

[1] The figures in the following are slightly amended in accordance with later computations. See the writer's report on the Bureau of Education submitted to the third annual convention of the Jewish Community of New York City (New York, 1912), p. 24.]

up certain existing institutions, but should be used as a lever for the study and improvement of primary Jewish education in New York City as a whole. He proposed the establishment of a bureau for Jewish education having the following objects:

1. To study the Jewish educational forces in New York City with a view to co-operation and the elimination of waste and overlapping.

2. To get in touch with the best teachers and workers and to organize them for their material and spiritual advancement.

3. To carry on a propaganda in order to acquaint the Jews of New York with the problem of Jewish education and with the means of solving it.

4. To operate one or two model schools for elementary pupils for the purpose of working out in practice the various phases of primary Jewish education.

The plan formulated by Dr. Benderly was submitted, through Dr. Magnes, to the executive committee of the Jewish Community of New York City, which adopted it and elected a board of five trustees to take charge of the new organization for a period of five years. The trustees, in turn, appointed Dr. Benderly director. The bureau was formally opened on October 1, 1910.[1]

[1]The rest of the article describing the activities of the Bureau has been omitted. A brief description of these activities, which is more up to date, will be found in the *Jewish Communal Register of New York City* for 1917-1918, p. 1143ff and in the above-quoted book of Dr. Dushkin, p. 100ff.]

XVII

THE FUNCTION OF JEWISH LEARNING IN AMERICA*

THE nature of the subject no less than the place and the occasion imperatively demand that, attempting to discuss a question which reaches deeply into the problems of the Jewish present, I should endeavor to look at it in the broad perspective of Jewish history, in which a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past. I shall therefore request you to detach yourselves for a moment from your surroundings and to accompany me in your imagination to an earlier period of the Jewish past, which is removed from us by such a millennial "yesterday," and yet in many essential aspects anticipates the situation in which the Jews of America find themselves today. I refer to the period marked by the rise of Jewish learning in Spain.

For many hundreds of years Judaism had been centered in Babylonia; there the foundations were laid upon which the structure of post-biblical Judaism has rested until this day. Through the medium of the Exilarchate and, above all, through its colleges and academies, Babylonian Jewry guided and controlled the spiritual life of the Jews all over the world.

*Address delivered at the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia, on Founder's Day, March 9, 1914. Published in the Student's Annual of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1914, p. 124ff.

Although situated in the midst of the powerful Persian Empire with a highly developed religion and culture, the Jews of Babylonia managed to live a life of their own, easily adapting themselves to the demands of the environment which were merely of an external nature. But in the middle of the seventh century a new factor began to disturb the serenity of Babylonian Jewish life. The victorious Arabs changed not only the political character but also the religious and cultural complexion of the Babylonian lands. The young generation among the Jews began to hearken to the new ideas which followed in the wake of the Mohammedan arms, and a deep religious unrest, the unavoidable result of a mixture of cultures, took hold of the thoughtful elements of the Jewish community. It seemed, to quote the words of an illustrious thinker of that period,[1] "as if men had sunk in seas of doubt and were covered with the waters of error. Yet there was no diver to bring them forth from the depth and no swimmer to seize them and rescue them from drowning." The official leaders of the community looked with indifference and disdain upon the spread of what to them seemed but new-fangled and short-lived ideas. But when the novel influences began to crystallize themselves in sectarianism, and religious factions sprang up which did not shrink from denying and opposing their authority, the powers that be at last bestirred themselves. They realized the necessity of making concessions to the new spirit of the age, and when the presidency of the leading academy at the time, the celebrated

[1] Saadia Gaon, in the introduction to his *Emunoth we-Deoth*.

Yeshibah at Sura, became vacant, they decided to call to this post, which implied the religious leadership of Babylonian Jewry, a man who would not only possess an intimate knowledge of the traditional source of Judaism, but would also exhibit a thorough understanding of what at that time was looked upon as modern culture. Such a man, however, could no more be found within the ranks of retrograde Babylonian Jewry, and the Babylonian authorities saw themselves compelled to entrust the Gaonate of Sura, for the first time in seven hundred years, to a foreigner, Rabbi Saadia ben Joseph, of Fayyum in Egypt.

But the remedy was applied too late. For in the meantime the Eastern Caliphate had entered upon a period of political and spiritual decline. Tolerance and liberty of conscience had given way to bigotry and fanaticism, and with it the external condition of the Babylonian Jews had changed for the worse. Their political freedom and, as a consequence, their economic prosperity was greatly curtailed. They now lacked not only the men but also the means to keep up their time-honored position in the Jewish world. Strife, the inseparable companion of retrogression, only helped to accelerate the process of decline. The colleges and academies, whence light and leading had for centuries gone forth to the whole of Israel, now depended for their subsistence on the generosity of the Jews outside of Babylonia, and Babylonian Jewish supremacy was at an end.

Scarcely, however, had the sun of Jewry set in the East, when it began to rise in the West. On the

Iberian peninsula, the New World of that period, the Western Caliphate was rapidly blossoming into strength and beauty. Originally a colony of the Caliphate of Bagdad, it finally obtained its independence, and with the vigor and courage of youth it began to erect a magnificent structure of citizenship, vouchsafing life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all the inhabitants of the land. The Jews, who had helped the Arabs to wrest the peninsula from the semi-savage Goths, took from the very beginning an active and prominent part in the political, economic and cultural development of the country under the new rêgime. As far as Judaism is concerned, the Jews of Spain were at first dependent for their spiritual guidance upon their brethren in Babylonia. Their religious difficulties were solved by the Geonim of Sura and Pumbaditha and even their liturgy had to be imported from distant Babylonia.

But on the gray horizon of this spiritual mediocrity there rises like a morning star the luminous figure of Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, a man with universal Jewish interests, whose sympathies extend to the far-off semi-Jewish Khazars, whose liberality embraces the colleges and academies of Babylonia, but who at the same time realizes the necessity of an independent Jewish life in the new land. He supports native Jewish talent in the person of Menahem ben Saruk, but also endeavors to attract prominent Jewish scholars from abroad, such as Dunash Ibn Labrat, who introduces into Spain the science of Hebrew philology, and Moses ben Hanokh, who establishes a center of Talmudic learning on the Iberian

peninsula, and together with the men of learning the far-sighted Hasdai cautiously transfers to the new land the libraries of the "old country." The native Jewish scholars of Spain, who, at first, are looked down upon by their colleagues from the earlier seats of learning, gradually equal, then rival, and finally excel their former masters. Like a focus which first gathers the rays of the sun and then sends them forth into space, Spanish Jewry passes through a period of spiritual dependence to one of spiritual supremacy. Jewish culture in Spain becomes the universal possession of the whole house of Israel and for hundreds of years illumines with its beauteous rays the darkness and dinginess of the Jewish Middle Ages.

What has just been said of Judaism in Spain of a thousand years ago applies, with scarcely more than a change of names, to Jewish America of today. But American Jewry resembles in one more essential aspect its predecessor on the Iberian peninsula. For just as the Spanish period of Jewish history, which is characterized by the association of the Jews with the environment, succeeded the Babylonian period, during which the Jews kept themselves aloof from their neighbors, so does American Judaism of today, confronted with the imperative task of becoming part and parcel of general American life, follow in the wake of the long period of isolation in Poland and Russia. And however deeply we may love and admire the transcendent beauty and incomparable intensity of Jewish life and learning in the Russian ghetto, the force of logic and of history

compels us to connect ourselves, over the chasm of centuries, with our predecessors in Spain, who were faced by conditions and problems similar to those with which we in this country have to battle today. It is, therefore, natural to expect that a study of the Spanish period of Jewish history will yield to us many a valuable lesson which, with the help of a kind Providence, we may turn to good account in the new Jewish center now rising before our eyes in this land.

The first lesson which impresses itself upon our mind as a result of our study is the unique significance of Jewish learning in the life of the Jewish people. Great and glorious as were the external successes of the Jews in Spain,—what alone has survived the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of the Golus and what alone has been woven inextricably into the texture of the Jewish consciousness are not their political, economic or charitable achievements, but the Jewish learning which they acquired and developed. Hasdai was the most influential diplomat at the most influential court of the age, but what entitles him to the gratitude of posterity is not his political genius or the diplomatic skill with which he brought the insolent Sancho Ramirez and his crafty grandmother, Queen Toda, to the feet of Abdarrahman the Third, but his patronage of Jewish culture in Spain. What makes Samuel Hanagid a prominent figure in the annals of Judaism are not the services he rendered as prime minister to the obscure Berber princes, Habus and Badis, but his Introduction into the Talmud and the prowess with which he handled the Hebrew lyre. And what gives Moses Maimonides his commanding

position as the Moses of post-biblical Judaism is not the medical skill with which he treated the vizier al-Fadil or the fair inmates of Saladin's harem, but the "Strong Hand" with which he acted as the "Guide of the Perplexed" to the eternal fountains of Jewish truth. And speaking of our own times, however intensely we may feel mortified by the sufferings of our brethern in Russia, and however deeply we may feel gratified by the successes of our fellow-Jews in Germany, long after the victims of the Czar's tyranny and the objects of the Kaiser's favor will have become dim recollections of the past, Russian-Jewish *Lamdanuth* and the German "Science of Judaism" will stand forth as the great contributions of Russian and German Jews to the treasury of Judaism. And whatever social, political and economic accomplishments a kind Providence may have in store for us in this free land, the standards by which a later age will judge the American phase of Jewish history will be neither our wealth nor our influence nor even our philanthropy, but that alone which will remain the inalienable possession of the entire House of Israel, our additions to the spiritual armory of the People of the Book.

And just as the Spanish period impresses upon us the unrivalled significance of Jewish learning in the development of our people, so does it illustrate to us the tendency which Jewish learning is to pursue in our own days if it is to obtain and to retain the role of a leading factor in Jewish life. The deeper we penetrate into the conditions of that period, the clearer are we led to recognize the remarkably har-

monious complexion of Jewish culture in Spain: its close and intimate association with the general culture of the age, on the one hand, and, on the other, its ability to preserve and to develop its distinct Jewish character and to sink deeply into the hearts and the minds of the Jewish people. Granted that Hebrew philology followed in the wake of the remarkable philological achievements of the Arabs, and that the technical terms of Hebrew grammar were fashioned after non-Jewish models,—the *hokmath hadikduk*, the science of Hebrew grammar, has yet become a characteristic feature of Jewish culture in the lands of the Golus. Granted that the glorious Hebrew poetry of that period, as was already pointed out by Harizi, owes its stimulus and development to the poetry of the Arabs, and that even the Zionides of Judah Halevi imitate the construction of an Arabic *Kasida*, yet the poems of Halevi or Ibn Gebirol are recited with fervor in the synagogues of the Diaspora. Granted that the Jewish philosophy of that period is influenced and determined by the thought of the Muslim environment, and that the very title of Bahya's celebrated work is a mere stock phrase of the Mohammedan Mu'tazilites, the *Hoboth ha-Lebaboth* is nevertheless the classic work of Jewish devotion, and *Yigdal*, which is in part an epitome of Aristotelian metaphysics, is an integral portion of the orthodox Jewish liturgy. Granted even that the great religious code of Maimonides is arranged in a manner reminiscent of the Mohammedan *fukaha*, and that its wonderful Hebrew diction is permeated with Arabisms, the *Mishne Torah* has never-

theless become a "Second Torah" to post-Talmudic Judaism, and to explain a "difficult *Rambam*" is still an object of glory and ambition in the Russian-Jewish Yeshibahs. Jewish learning in Spain may have been molded by the non-Jewish environment, but, in spite of it, or, rather, because of it, it became the inseparable heritage of Spanish Jewry and through it of the Jewry of the world.

What is true of the Spanish Jews of a thousand years ago, is equally true of the American Jews of today. We, too, live in a powerful environment which we cannot, and indeed, dare not disregard. The general culture of the land stands before us like an iron wall, and we shall be cracked like a nutshell if we attempt to run our heads against it. The only solution left to us is that of adaptation, but an adaptation which shall sacrifice nothing that is essential to Judaism, which shall not impoverish Judaism but enrich it, which, as was the case with Jewish culture in Spain, shall take fully into account what the environment demands of us, and shall yet preserve and foster our Jewish distinctiveness and originality. Let the cynics in our midst sneer to their heart's content at what they choose to brand as *minhag America*, Jewish learning in this country, like that of our ancestors in Spain, will rise and develop in intimate association with the culture of our neighbors. It will be American in language, in scope, in method, and yet be distinctively Jewish in essence, the proud possession of American Israel and through it in God's own time the cherished property of Universal Israel.

Finally, what gives Jewish learning in Spain its peculiar character and flavor is, as has already been

implied in the foregoing, its connection with practical life. Ardent as was the longing of the period for the higher and finer things of existence, its culture, with all its passionate quest for sweetness and light, is strongly colored by the healthy hue of reality. Jewish learning in Spain is not *weltfremd*, as it was in other lands and in other ages; on the contrary, it is anxious not only to meet but also to anticipate the legitimate demands of practical life. It is not accidental that the emphasis of Jewish learning in Spain is found just in those branches of knowledge which are the distinguishing characteristics of the general culture of the age. At this distance of time we may feel inclined to smile at the passionate heat with which men of affairs no less then men of letters were prone to discuss insignificant minutiae of Hebrew philology or hair-splitting subtleties of Jewish philosophy. But a deeper study of the period convinces us that what seems unimportant to us was an important and integral part of the general culture of the time, and the failure to satisfy the peculiar philological and philosophical cravings of the age within Judaism would have compelled the educated Jews to seek their satisfaction outside of Judaism. When Saadia Gaon engages in the discussion of what to us might seem a superfluous question as to whether God is able to change yesterday into today, it is not the fruitless search of a theory-monger, but the legitimate desire of a Jewish leader to solve in a Jewish way a problem that agitated at the time the minds of both Jews and non-Jews. And Maimonides, this giant of intellectualism, who regards the study of metaphysics as the ultimate

and exclusive goal of all human existence, constructs the enormous edifice of his literary activity with the clearly expressed view to the practical demands of the time.

What Jewish learning was to the Jews of Spain, it must also be to the Jews of this country. We, too, are confronted by great and complicated problems of Jewish life, problems not merely of Jewry, but of Judaism. We live in a period of great physical and spiritual upheavals in the life of our people. "In our own time—to repeat the words of Maimonides in the introduction to his Code—excessive persecutions overpower us. The pressure of the time makes itself felt everywhere and, as a result, the widsom of our wise is vanishing and the understanding of our men of understanding is hiding itself."[1] The tremendous process of Jewish immigration brings us constantly face to face with the necessity of evolving harmony out of the terrible chaos resulting from it. There is spiritual unrest outside of Judaism; there is greater spiritual unrest within Judaism. The perplexed of our own age are more numerous and more difficult to deal with than those of the Spanish period. In a crisis like this Jewish learning cannot afford, and indeed cannot be permitted, to stand aside. It must be called upon to abandon its attitude of neutrality, to descend from its lofty pedestal of pure theory and to take an active hand in the solution of the problems of practical life.

Yes, of practical life! But in advocating the practical function of Jewish learning, I should not

[1] See above p. 176, where the translation is differently worded.

like to be misunderstood. If I may for a moment speak personally, my notions of scholarship were fashioned in a country in which *Wissenschaft* and *Leben* are looked upon as opposites, a country which is proud of the fact that Hegel wrote his *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*, undisturbed by the roar of cannons on the battlefield of Jena. To be sure, scholarship to be useful to life must be detached from life. For scholarship is the point of Archimedes which is to pull life from its axis and to lift it to higher forms of existence. It is the pioneer which, regardless of consequences, blazes a path in unknown regions. What today creeps as a truism through the sluggish brain of the Philistine, flashed but yesterday as a paradox through the creative mind of the scholar. The student who from the window of his closet flirts with the mob on the street is not a champion of scholarship but a traitor to scholarship, for he reduces scholarship, which is the mistress of life, to a handmaid of life. And to be sure, in this country, with its unmistakable drift towards the tangible and material things of life, we need more than anywhere else the corrective and restraining influence of an idealistic and theoretic scholarship. To repeat the favorite plea of Professor Schechter, a community so essentially practical as ours stands in dire need of a few men who have the courage to be unpractical. A certain aloofness in scholarship is not only permissible, but indispensable, if scholarship is not to degenerate into fakirdom. But with all this, when the purely scholarly task of blazing new paths is accomplished, it is the right, nay, it is the duty of the scholar to throw them open to the public.

He who works in a laboratory and rushes into the headlines of the newspapers to tell the people of his half-authenticated experiments is a sensationalist who is rightly looked down upon by his fellow-scientists. But once the results have been definitely established, it is the sacred duty of the scholar to share them with his fellow-men. This is the attitude which Jewish learning in America ought to adopt towards the practical problems of Jewish life. While keeping itself aloof from the dust of the public arena, it ought to assume with energy and yet with dignity its rightful position as guide and teacher. It ought to carry the lofty and weighty message of our past into the midst of our present-day life and help to drive from it the shallowness and emptiness that threaten to blight it. It should enable us to view the puzzling difficulties of the fleeting moment in the broad perspective of our history and help us to find a solution which shall lift us beyond the narrow horizon of the present into the luminous regions of a Jewish future. Such is the great and honorable function of Jewish learning in America.

Having emphasized the practical aspect of Jewish learning in America, I should be untrue to my own plea, were I to limit myself to mere theoretic considerations. I shall, therefore, attempt to offer a few practical suggestions looking toward a more regular and more fruitful association between life and learning. It is not my intention to discuss the tasks and possibilities that face Jewish scholarship in America on its purely scientific side. There are other men in our midst who can speak with weight and authority on

this particular aspect of our problem. I shall confine myself to one single proposition which, though of a scientific character, borders closely on practical life.

I believe we Jews can claim without arrogance that we are a gifted people. But it seems to me that in few other branches have our talents been so strikingly displayed as in the domain of linguistics. Corporately the Jews speak nearly all the languages of the earth, and we often jestingly refer to the fact that, not satisfied with the natural organs of expression, we try to improve upon nature by forcing our limbs into the service of speech. It is not accidental that the creator of the only successful international language, the Esperanto, is a Jew, and one might name on the spur of the moment at least a dozen languages which for the first time have been investigated and described by Jewish scholars. Now it so happens that we have the rare fortune of being the contemporaries of a linguistic phenomenon which stands entirely unparalleled in the history of languages, the phenomenon of a tongue which thousands of years ago was the medium of expression of a great nation and a great literature, which, having vanished from the mouth of its people, remained deeply rooted in its head and its heart, and, after accompanying it faithfully in all its wanderings and vicissitudes, now rises phoenix-like before us in its ancient home. The only drawback of this wonderful linguistic spectacle lies in the fact that it is our own language, developed by our own people on our own soil. I refer to the revival of the Hebrew language in Palestine. Now whether we be Zionists, non-Zionists or even anti-Zionists, whether we look upon Palestine

as the land of our fathers or as the land of our children, or whether even America be our Zion and Washington our Jerusalem, the fact remains that the rejuvenation of the Hebrew language in Palestine stands without a parallel in the history of human speech, and that what the most authoritative philologists pronounced to be impossible has become reality before our very eyes. What then would be more natural than that we Jews should be the first to study and the first to present to the world this unique linguistic phenomenon which so marvellously illustrates the contention of the psalmist that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings strength is ordained? What a disgrace if we Jews should be preceded by others in a domain which is so essentially and peculiarly our own? And yet the danger of such a disgrace is staring us in the face. The Germans are very active in Palestine at present, and active not only politically but also, as is always the case with them, scientifically. Only lately two different presentations of the Arabic dialect spoken in the Holy Land have been published by German scholars. And I am positively haunted by the fear lest one day I may find on my desk a bulky volume bearing the bulky title "*Ausfuehrliches Lehrbuch des in Palaestina gesprochenen neu-hebraeischen Idioms*," and my Jewish self-respect will have received a slap in the face. Verily the Jews of America who boast of their practical sense and are at the same time alive to the claims of Jewish learning cannot neglect this particular claim which is strictly scientific and yet borders so closely on living and throbbing reality.

The other direction in which Jewish learning in America calls for stimulus and support is of a less

technical and of a more personal character. I have pointed out a moment ago that a certain aloofness in the scholar is fully justifiable, and that too intimate a contact with the crowd may even prove fatal to him. Yet the scholar remains a human being just the same, and like every other human being he needs the sympathy and encouragement of his fellow-men. It is a fatal mistake to think that financial support is all that scholarship needs and calls for. Coarse vegetables may well thrive on the moisture they receive from the soil; delicate plants require in addition the warming rays of the sun. What brought Jewish learning to such glorious blossom in Spain were not alone the liberal stipends of the Jewish Maecenases, but their personal interest, their readiness and their ability to learn from the scholars whose patrons they were. What in a later age made Jewish learning in Poland the leading factor in Jewish life was certainly not its financial substructure nor even exclusively its religious significance, but the commanding position it occupied in the social fabric of the people. Theoretically the scholar may well be aware of the importance of his vocation; he may easily persuade himself that the broad and majestic river of life ultimately goes back, often by circuitous and subterranean channels, to those far-off sources of learning which lose themselves in the mountains. But in moments of lonesomeness and despair, when his hopefulness is blighted and his enthusiasm is stifled by the indifference and ignorance that surround him, the feeling steals over him that he may after all be but a superfluous fixture in the life of the community, and such a feeling spells instantan-

eous death to his productivity and usefulness. Old Europe realized this danger long ago. While stingy in her material support of learning, she has managed by a cleverly devised system of social recognition, such as titles, medals, prizes, memberships in learned societies and numerous contrivances of a similar order, to coax scientific research out of the scholar even as honey is coaxed out of the bee. We in the new world have, thank Heaven, outlived the senilities of crafty old Europe. The German *Titelwesen* has no attraction for us, and the artificial distinctions of Europe fail of their purpose in a land in which the head of the nation is just plain Mr. President. But what the scholar so urgently needs and so sadly lacks is social recognition of a higher kind, the recognition that he is a useful and valuable member of society, or, what is more, the opportunity of serving as such, the realization that the fruits of his labor, however circuitous the route may be, will ultimately reach the people and contribute towards its progress.

If this problem which deeply affects the whole status of Jewish scholarship in this country is to be solved, I believe there is only one solution for it, a solution about which we in America cannot be doubtful. For if there is anything which is characteristic of this country it is its tendency toward corporate endeavor, its ability to merge the narrow and sluggish rivulets of individual energy into the broad and swift current of a corporation or society. "When an American has an idea," quoth a famous French writer, "he directly seeks a second American to share it. If there be three, they elect a president and two secretar-

ies. Given four, they name a keeper of records and the office is ready for work; five, they convene a general meeting and the society is fully constituted." The number of Jewish scholars in this country has, praise be to Heaven, long ago reached the minimum required by the French writer. We have a goodly number of men who as professional scholars are actively engaged in the various branches of Jewish learning, and we have many more who are interested in it passively as amateurs and sympathizers. And yet there is not a single society or organization which should represent the brotherhood of Jewish scholars to themselves and to the world. There is in this country a Society of Biblical Literature, made up, with few exceptions, of Christian theologians; there is an American Oriental Society, but there is no corresponding organization for the wide field of Jewish scholarship. What we need is a Society of Jewish Learning which shall bring the scholars scattered all over this land into personal contact with one another and shall set the standards of Jewish scholarship. At the periodical meetings held by the Society the scholars should submit to one another, both for instruction and inspection, the fruits of their research, and at an annual gathering the broad lines of progress in the field of Jewish scholarship should be made known to the outside world. Such a society will no doubt provide a considerable amount of that stimulus and encouragement which Jewish scholarship needs and up to the present still lacks.

Yet another organization which shall even more directly render Jewish scholarship useful to Jewish life

is still a desideratum in this country. At present the Jewish scholar in America who may feel inclined to share with his people the fruits of his endeavors and to contribute his mite towards the shaping of Jewish communal life has no means of doing so, without exceeding those limits of propriety with which a wise convention hedges him around. The medium of the book unfortunately reaches but the "few," and there is no journalistic or social vehicle of which the Jewish scholar can avail himself without loss of dignity, while the non-Jewish agencies which are generally far more effective in reaching the Jewish public are, as a rule, hermetically closed to him. Now what is still a consummation to be wished for here is an accomplished fact in Germany. German Jewry, which numbers not quite one-fourth of the Jewry of America, can boast of no less than two hundred and twenty-one Societies for Jewish History and Literature which are primarily engaged in the popularization of Jewish learning and offer the Jewish scholar an effective and yet dignified opportunity to communicate himself to the Jewish public. There is scarcely a town in Germany which does not possess such a society, and in many cases the local society is identical in its membership with that of the entire community. In these societies the whole immense range of Jewish thought and life is viewed in the broad perspective of Jewish learning, whether it be a topic such as "the Logical Foundations of the Belief in God," or some practical problem of German-Jewish life. These two hundred and twenty-one societies are united in a large central organization, at the head of which are to

be found some of the leading scholars and some of the most eminent men of affairs of German Jewry. Of course, I do not contend that this German model must or can be exactly reproduced in this country. Conditions here are vastly different, and I have picked up sufficient American patriotism to persuade myself that in many respects we can do things better than the people on the other side. But the fundamental idea underlying this organization, which has in part also been imitated in England, is an absolute necessity in this country, if Jewish learning, instead of becoming a dead weight upon American Jewry, shall again be a "tree of life" for the Jewish people and exercise a steadying and ennobling influence on the life and thought of this community.

And finally, whatever we decide to do in support of Jewish learning in America, let us do it quickly. We live in a critical moment of our history, critical in the literal sense of the word, for the very next step will decide the future course of our development. The Jewish people, whose life has not been allowed to flow in a broad and smooth river-bed, resembles that wonderful natural phenomenon, the geysers or intermittent springs, which, having accumulated tremendous forces under ground, suddenly shoot forth to great heights and then remain silent. We in America are on the eve of such a magnificent outburst, for we have been gradually and unobservedly accumulating the immense stores of energy of European Jewry, and they are now seeking an outlet. Woe to us if we allow the next spurting forth of our strength to go to waste, if we fail to catch the precious liquid

of Jewish productivity and to preserve it for the future. Now is the time to rear the structure of Jewish learning in America and to secure for it its rightful position in the life of the community. The opportunities which are at our disposal now may be lost irretrievably in the next generation. In the springtime of the Science of Judaism its founders looked forward to the moment when the child of their care would be taken over by non-Jews and be granted a place at the universities as a part of the general culture of mankind. But now that bitter experience has shown us how the hatred of the Jew has penetrated even into the sacred precincts of science, and how Jewish learning, distorted by bias and prejudice, has been brandished as a weapon against Judaism, we realize more clearly than ever that we are the natural and rightful guardians of our own vineyard. And standing, as we do, on the threshold of a new period, a period which we hope will figure in future Jewish history as the Rise of Jewish Learning in America, we cannot but be guided by the motto of the wise Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who is for myself?" and, above all, "If not now, when then?"

XVIII

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN AMERICAN JEWRY.

A PLEA FOR RECONCILIATION.*

VARIOUS occurrences of recent date have revealed a rift in American Jewry which if not healed in time is likely to result in a permanent schism. The agitation centering around the question of a Jewish Congress is not the cause of this rift; it is rather an effect or a symptom betokening the profound difference of opinion and sentiment which at present divides the Jews of America. In the re-alignment of American Jewry which this struggle is calling forth the Zionists and the non-Zionists of this country—the former centering around their local organization, the latter largely represented by the American Jewish Committee—have been taking opposite sides. Those of us whose Judaism is broad enough to embrace with equal loyalty the ideals of Zionism and the interests of American Judaism cannot but view with the deepest concern the possibility of a permanent conflict be-

*Published in the *Menorah Journal*, December, 1915. The article is based on a memorandum submitted by the writer to a leading Zionist in June, 1915. Though the issue of an American-Jewish Congress, discussed in the present article, has been pushed into the background by the exigencies of war, the questions connected with it are still as vitally important today as they were three years ago. [Since writing the above the American-Jewish Congress was held in December, 1918, and proved a magnificent demonstration of the essential unity of American Israel.]

tween these two sections of American Jewry, a conflict fraught with the gravest consequences, not only for the Jewish cause in this country in general but also for the Zionist movement—a conflict, moreover, in which no victory achieved by either side can be anything but a Pyrrhic victory.

The situation is one that demands careful thought and delicate action. Only a few of us are in a position to influence the course of events by acting, but many of us may help to clarify the situation by thinking. A correct diagnosis is an indispensable preliminary to a cure, and it is only by finding out whether the issues underlying the present struggle represent a chronic and perhaps irremediable conflict, or are rather the effect of an acute and therefore curable misunderstanding that a proper solution may be discovered and proposed. It is from this point of view that an attempt is here made to analyze the present situation in American Jewry, to trace the causes which have produced it, and to point out the consequences which are unavoidable unless a remedy be applied in time.

To my mind there are two fundamental issues which separate the two groups in American Jewry from one another. They may be expressed in the following formulas: 1. *Diaspora versus Palestine*; 2. *Religion versus Nationalism.*

Without any desire to lose myself in philosophic subtleties, I shall, for the sake of brevity, adopt the Hegelian phraseology and explain the development of these issues on the principle of *Thesis*, *Antithesis* and *Synthesis*, i. e., of the initial prevalence of one

extreme, of its yielding subsequently to the opposite extreme, and of the final harmonization of the two in a higher unity, combining the essential features of both. I shall endeavor to point out that the Synthesis forms the ground on which both parties may co-operate, without sacrificing an iota of their respective convictions.

The first issue, expressed in the formula *Diaspora versus Palestine*, hinges on the question as to whether the Jewish people finds its best opportunities for development in the Diaspora, i. e., as an integral part of the nations in whose midst it lives, or, away from the other nations, as a separate entity, on its own soil in Palestine.

When modern Jewry, after the isolation of centuries, suddenly emerged from the Ghetto to seek a place in the sun in the midst of the Christian environment, the thesis adopted by it was *Diaspora*. Consumed with the desire for emancipation, for sharing the benefits and attractions of the new life around them, the Jews discarded the hope for an independent national existence in Palestine, which had been their lode-star throughout the ages. *Diaspora* as opposed to *Palestine*, and as exclusive of it, became the slogan of emancipated Jewry. The Jewish religion was refitted to harmonize with this new striving for material and cultural progress. Reform Judaism arose, the main object of which was to break down the previous separateness of the Jews; and the theory of a "Jewish mission" sprang into life, not as a spontaneous growth of Jewish tradition, but as a forced hot-house product of practical life—a theory

which proclaimed that an isolated Jewish existence in Palestine was subversive of the very essence of Judaism, that the mission of the Jewish people was to propagate monotheism among the nations of the earth, and that this mission could only be carried out in the Dispersion, in the midst of the nations which were to be the objects of that mission.

As time progressed, however, the *Diaspora* thesis gradually lost its force. Emancipation failed to fulfill the ardent hopes attached to it. The nations refused to allow the Jews to participate fully and unrestrictedly in the general life of the country. Anti-Semitism, manifesting itself in the crude form of hatred, or under the subtle guise of prejudice, turned, in many cases, the liberties previously granted to the Jews into a scrap of paper. On the other hand, the dangers of this extreme Diaspora Judaism, at first little thought of, began to loom larger and larger. The rush for emancipation threatened not only to disrupt the unity of the Jewish people throughout the world, which had been maintained during the ages of suffering and persecution, but it also led large and important sections of Jewry to assimilation, that is, to complete absorption.

As a protest against the thesis *Diaspora* its opposite came to life, the antithesis *Palestine*. Political Zionism sprang into being, loudly proclaiming that emancipation was a failure; that Judaism had no chance of life in the Dispersion, and that the only salvation of Jewry lay in being transferred to Palestine. *Zionism or Assimilation* was the alternative placed

before the Jewish people. All efforts of Jewry, as the last attempt to escape annihilation, were to be focused on the obtaining of a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine. All Jewish endeavors in the Diaspora were deprecated, because consecrated to a cause which was foredoomed to failure.

It was not long before the antithesis, too, began to reveal its deficiencies. The difficulties of reaching the Zionist goal very soon proved far greater than had been anticipated in the blissful ecstasy of the Zionist honeymoon. The ultimate consummation of the national hope receded further and further before the longing gaze of the Jewish people, and no longer held out an immediate remedy for the pressing needs of suffering Jewry. The conviction also gradually gained ground that, even under the most favorable of circumstances, Palestine could only harbor a fraction of the Jewish people, and that the vast bulk of the Jews would still remain in the lands of the Diaspora. Zionists who were looking reality in the face could not accept the view of the extremists, who were ready to save a small portion of the Jewish people at the cost of abandoning to its fate the enormous majority thereof.

As a result, a new formula asserted itself: *Diaspora plus Palestine.* It was the combination between the two extremes of Diaspora existence and Palestine existence. This synthesis, generally called Cultural or Spiritual Zionism, proclaimed that Palestine was indispensable for the continuation of Judaism, for it was the only spot where the spirit of Judaism, undisturbed by conflicting influences, could develop nor-

mally and unfold all its hidden possibilities, and the only bond of unity which could save the scattered members of the race from falling asunder into disjointed fragments. The Diaspora, on the other hand, as the dwelling place of the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people, had problems of its own which clamored equally for solution.

Hence the Jewish task became a double one: the Jews in every country, while participating to the full in the life of their environment—for the return to the Ghetto was neither desirable nor possible—had to endeavor to secure a maximum of elbow-room for the development of their own section of Jewry, while as part of universal Israel they had to keep up their contact with the Jews throughout the world and labor with them for the realization of the common Jewish hope, that of a spiritual center in the historic land of Judaism. *Diaspora without Palestine* was impossible, because without the refreshing breath of a healthy Jewish life in Palestine it was bound to wither and dry up. *Palestine without the Diaspora* was equally impossible, because it lacked the backing of the people as a whole, and was in danger of becoming a petty and obscure corner in the vast expanse of the Jewish Dispersion, a sort of Jewish Nigeria.

This synthesis was not a pale cast of thought, the flimsy product of an imaginative brain. It had its prototype in the actual facts of history. For during several centuries preceding the dissolution of the Jewish state, Palestine was the spiritual center of Judaism, in the sense just indicated. The Jews

outside of Palestine were superior, not only in numbers, but also in wealth and influence, to those of Palestine. The Jews of Egypt, and the same applies to other countries of that period, were closely associated with the cultural and material aspirations of their environment. Philo was one of the most illustrious representatives of the Hellenic culture of his age. These Diaspora Jews even found it necessary to translate the Holy Writings into Greek. Yet they were, at the same time, loyal to Palestine. They paid their Shekel, they made their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and looked upon the Holy Land as the spiritual center of all Jewry.

The other fundamental issue on which Jewish opinion is divided is closely associated with the preceding one; it hinges on the formula *Religion versus Nationalism*. From its earliest beginnings down to the time of modern emancipation, Judaism represented an indissoluble combination of nationalism and religion. Though ultimately intended to appeal to the whole of humanity, Judaism was essentially a *national* religion. Its bearer was a national community which jealously guarded its racial purity, and its external manifestations assumed the forms of a national life. Again, the Jewish people was, first and foremost, a *religious* nation. Its sole reason for existence was, in the belief of every one of its members, "to know the Lord" and to make Him known to others. A Jew who did not believe in the fundamentals of the Jewish creed or who did not observe the fundamentals of the Jewish ceremonial was as much of a

monstrosity as the Jew who denied the common racial descent of the Jews in the past, or their common national destiny in the future.

The departure of the Jews from the Ghetto and their entrance into modern life marked a turning-point also in this direction. Filled with the desire of becoming part of the nations in whose midst they lived, modern Jews were ready, and thought they were compelled, to deny the national character of Judaism. The Jews were now labeled as Germans or Frenchmen of the Mosaic persuasion, who were divided from their fellow-citizens by the purely spiritual affiliations of religious faith—the same affiliations which divided the Christian population. Here, too, Reform Judaism was quick to meet the demands of practical life. It began to chop off all the elements in Judaism which betrayed a national character, both in the domain of doctrine and of practice, though it halted half way, and down to this day still acknowledges, in flagrant contradiction with its own theory, a number of rites and ceremonies which bear an unmistakable racial imprint.

This transformation of Judaism, or rather this transformation of Jewish terminology—for, in many cases, it was merely a question of terms—was greatly stimulated by the development of nationalism in Western Europe, where the structure of the modern state excluded, or was thought to exclude, a diversity of nationalities, while the principle of religious toleration left enough room for a variety of religious beliefs. As a result, those Jews who had lost their

religious affiliations were bound to feel that they were outcasts in the religious community of Israel; they became either *konfessionslos* or, by a curious perversion of logic and conscience, became members of the dominant faith.

The thesis "Judaism *qua* Religion" was followed by the antithesis "Judaism *qua* Nationalism." It is interesting to observe that the antithesis came from the Jews of Eastern Europe who, in their overwhelming majority, were adherents of strict orthodoxy. Those Jews of Russia and Poland who had drifted away from their religious moorings were neither psychologically nor physically in a position to abandon Judaism; psychologically, because they were too strongly saturated with Jewish culture and Jewish associations to tear themselves away from the influence of Judaism; physically, because they were excluded from participating in the life of the environment and were forced to remain within the fold. Living as the Eastern Jews did in compact masses, they found it easier, both in theory and in practice, to emphasize the national aspect of the Jewish community. As a result, a doctrine sprang up which looked upon Jewry as an essentially racial or national entity, in which religion was merely one of the many passing phases of its historical development. If among the champions of the thesis "Religion" there were Jews who celebrated the Ninth of Ab as a holiday, because it marked, in their eyes, the end of Jewry as a nation, there were, among the others, the adherents of the antithesis "Nationalism," Jews

who arranged entertainments on the Day of Atonement, as a public protest against the religious character ascribed to Judaism.

Here, too, the synthesis was gradually paving its way, and the formula "Religion *plus* Nationalism" was supplanting the thesis "Judaism *qua* Religion" and the antithesis "Judaism *qua* Nationalism." The religionists, that is, the believers in the purely religious character of Judaism, began to realize the devastating effect of their doctrine on Jewish life and development, while the nationalists, without sacrificing their convictions—for religion, least of all sentiments, can be forced on modern men—began to appreciate the overwhelming influence of the Jewish religion as an historic factor in the life of the Jewish people, and were ready to acknowledge the difficulty and the danger of squeezing an officially nationalistic Jewry into the narrow frame of the modern *Nationalstaat.*

This mutual *rapprochement* resulted gradually in a tacit agreement—an agreement far more durable than a legal compact, because founded on sentiment rather than on law—which implied the recognition of Judaism as composed of Religion and Nationalism, but left sufficient room to include the two extreme types of Jews: those whose loyalty to Judaism was entirely fed from the fountain of religion, and those whose devotion to Judaism was altogether grounded in race consciousness.

This development, which may be traced in various countries of modern Europe, nowhere assumed such

huge proportions and such striking manifestations as it did in America. The struggle, hinging on the two opposite doctrines, was nowhere else so well defined and nowhere else fraught with so many tangible consequences as in America, for the reason that American Jewry, as no other Jewry in the world, was made up of two different elements, sharply divided in their traditions and associations, as well a in their mental and psychological complexion. The Jews hailing from the lands of emancipation in Western Europe, who are conventionally, though not quite accurately, designated as German Jews, brought over with them the theses *Diaspora* as against *Palestine*, and *Religion* as against *Nationalism*. The immigrants from Eastern Europe, the children of the Ghetto, who with equal inaccuracy are termed Russian Jews, carried with them the antithesis *Palestine* as against *Diaspora* and, as represented by the extremists among them, *Nationalism* as against *Religion*. The fanatics of Diaspora Judaism and of Judaism as a pure faith are to be found exclusively among the "German" Jews. The radical adherents of Palestine and of Jewish nationalism are recruited entirely from the ranks of the "Russian" Jews.

These issues were of particular and immediate significance to the Jews in this country; for America has, in less than one generation, become the second largest center of the Jewish Disapora, and bids fair to become the first, instead of the second, within another generation. No other country in the world offers, even approximately, such a favorable combina-

tion of opportunities for the development of a Diaspora Judaism, as does America: economic possibilities, vast and sparsely populated territories, freedom of action, liberty of conscience, equality of citizenship, appreciation of the fundamentals of Judaism, variety of population, excluding a rigidly nationalistic state policy, and other similar factors. It is no wonder, therefore, that in no other country did Reform Judaism, as the incarnation of Diaspora Judaism, attain such luxurious growth as it did in America. It discarded, more radically than in Europe, the national elements still clinging to Judaism, and it solemnly proclaimed that Judaism was wholly and exclusively a religious faith, and that America was the Zion and Washington the Jerusalem of American Israel.

On the other hand, the emigrants from Russia brought the antithesis on the scene. They quickly perceived the decomposing effect of American life upon Jewish doctrine and practice, and they became convinced more firmly than ever that Diaspora Judaism was a failure, and that the only antidote was Palestine and nothing but Palestine. The nationalists among them beheld in the very same factors in which the German Jews saw the possibilities of a Diaspora Judaism the chances for organizing Jewry on purely nationalistic lines. Nowhere else, except perhaps in Russia, can be found a greater amount of Palestinian sentiment, as well as a larger manifestation of a one-sided Jewish nationalism, than is to be met with in this country.

This conflict of ideas became extraordinarily aggravated by numerous influences of a personal character.

The division between the so-called German Jews and the so-called Russian Jews was not limited to a difference in theory. It was equally nourished by far-reaching differences in economic and social position and in the entire range of mental development. The German Jews were the natives; the Russian Jews were the newcomers. The German Jews were the rich; the Russian Jews were the poor. The German Jews were the dispensers of charity; the Russian Jews were the receivers of it. The German Jews were the employers; the Russian Jews were the employees. The German Jews were deliberate, reserved, practical, sticklers for formalities, with a marked ability for organization; the Russian Jews were quick-tempered, emotional, theorizing, haters of formalities, with a decided bent toward individualism. An enormous amount of explosives had been accumulating between the two sections which if lit by a spark might have wrecked the edifice of American Israel while yet in the process of construction.

And yet, not only was the conflict averted, but the impending struggle gave way to hearty and extensive cooperation, such as cannot be witnessed elsewhere in the whole Jewish world (one recalls particularly the analogy of England) where East and West seem never to meet. As the two sections came into closer contact with one another, they learned to understand one another and to appreciate their respective points of view. This cooperation was not founded upon the flimsy framework of political expediency. It was grounded in that synthesis of Jewish life which combines in a higher unity the

essential elements of the doctrines formerly believed to be exclusive of one another. The German Jews, while emphasizing the needs of Diaspora Judaism and anxious to build up its largest manifestation in America, learned to appreciate the quickening and ennobling effect upon the Diaspora of a normal Hebrew life in Palestine, and became interested in the regeneration of the Holy Land. The Russian Jews, on the other hand, though laying particular stress on the possibilities of Judaism in Palestine, put their shoulder to the wheel and were ready to assist in rearing the great structure of Judaism in America. The so-called religionists, while looking upon Judaism as a faith, were yet disinclined to repudiate the purely nationalistic Jews, whose enthusiasm and devotion they admired, even though it flowed from a source they did not officially acknowledge. The so-called nationalists, basing their Judaism on race consciousness, realized that a common foundation of Judaism in this country could only be laid along the lines of religious affiliation.

This cooperation found tangible expression in the recent participation of American Jews in the upbuilding of Palestine, a participation which one will vainly look for in a similar group—I am not speaking of isolated individuals—in other countries. The same desire for a better understanding was further embodied in the movement toward Kehillah organization, which, though centering around the Jewish religion, still clearly implied the national element in Judaism.

There was every reason to hope that this co-operation, which had been so happily inaugurated between the two sections, would become more intimate and more extensive, and that the interaction of the heterogeneous elements of American Jewish life would resolve itself in a great and strong harmony. America bade fair to become an ideal Jewish center, where the practical wisdom of emancipated Jewry and the idealistic intensity of Ghetto Jewry would be merged in one united Jewish community, fully conscious of its duty as the future leader of the Jewish Diaspora and acknowledging its indebtedness to the center of all Jewry in the Land of our Fathers.

Suddenly, however, a reaction seems to have set in, which threatens to disrupt the harmony hitherto prevailing. This reaction, which is fraught with grave consequences for the future of American Judaism no less than for the Zionist movement, dates from, or at least coincides with, the struggle centering around the Haifa Technikum. This is not the place to enter into an analysis of that momentous issue. It is enough to state that the bond of unity was disrupted with rude hands, and the old conflict hinging on the issues of Diaspora and Nationalism broke out with new fury. Again we see Diaspora Judaism pitted against Palestinian Judaism, and Religion against Nationalism. Reason has given way to passion, and discrimination to generalization. The Jews of the new Palestine, who have given of their life-blood to the rejuvenation of our homeland, are sweepingly declared to be "anarchists," while, on the

other hand, American Jews who, with single-hearted devotion, have been the builders of the great Jewish center in the New World, are contemptuously sneered at as "assimilationists."

In this mood of distrust and prejudice, American Jewry was overtaken by the great crisis resulting from the World War, and the disharmony prevailing between the two factions soon found tangible expression in the struggle over a Jewish Congress. The two elements of American Jewry were clearly divided on the issue: the German or native Jews, represented by leading members of the American Jewish Committee, were opposed to the calling of a congress, while the Russian or immigrant Jews, speaking largely through the Zionist organization, clamored for it.

From what has preceded I believe it may be safely concluded that this demand for a Congress on the one hand, and the opposition to it on the other, are not rooted in diametrically opposed and deeply implanted theories of Judaism but are rather the expression of different moods or temperaments. The immigrant Jews, who were directly concerned in the war, since its horrors affected their homelands and the kin they left behind, and who were impulsive and sentimental, felt the burning need of crying out in their despair, and were ready to face the consequences which might result from this outcry. The native Jews, whose sympathy with their far-off brethren, profound though it was, could hardly, in the nature of the case, be more than indirect, and whose accustomed reserve

and self-restraint enabled them to judge the issues more calmly, shrunk from the risks which in their opinion were implied in an open protest of the Jewish people before the inflamed public opinion of the non-Jewish world. It is not my intention, nor is it my function, to render judgment in so momentous an hour on an issue concerning which Jewish opinion is diametrically yet honestly divided. But it is necessary to point out that whichever side may be in the right—serious as may be the dangers of holding a congress or not, the dangers involved in a split over this question are incalculably more serious. Such a split may not only result in permanent and perhaps irreparable injury to the Jewish cause in America and to the Zionist movement in this country, but may also, by aligning the two sections of American Jewry against one another, spell nothing short of disaster to the Jewish people as a whole. The stakes involved in this conflict are infinitely greater than the issue which has given rise to it.

So far as American Judaism is concerned, the practical results of this strife between Zionists and non-Zionists in America—to leave aside all theoretical considerations—may prove to be fatal. It will reopen the gap between the two elements of American Jewry which had almost been closed. The work of American Judaism has been done by both elements. Prominent non-Zionists and even anti-Zionists have frequently and gratefully acknowledged the debt which American Israel owes to the cooperation of the Zionists. The institutions of

American Jewry depend to a large extent for their existence upon the non-Zionists, who may now by the force of reaction be driven into anti-Zionism. But the progress of these institutions just as largely depends upon those who are Zionists. The withdrawal of the Zionists from American Jewish work—and such withdrawal may become a moral duty for the Zionists who are loyal to the movement and respect their convictions—might mean a complete standstill in the life of American Jewry. Perhaps there are a few among us who are skeptical about the fate of American Judaism, and who therefore see no harm in hastening its disintegration. But those of us who are profoundly concerned about the future of the two and one-half million Jews who are now in America, and of twice that number who may one day be here cannot but view with the utmost anxiety the danger of wrecking what promises to become the greatest Jewish center in the history of the Jews since their dispersion.

As for the Zionist movement, one cannot help doubting whether Zionism, even if it succeeded in defeating its opponents, would thereby obtain its object. I am not speaking of the very considerable material injury which the movement will suffer from the indifference and hostility of the other side. I am rather thinking of the dangers incurred by Zionism itself if, having repulsed the so-called classes, it becomes a one-sided movement of the masses. Of course, no Zionist can be otherwise than deeply gratified by the prospect of Zionism becoming a

cause of the people, but unless it manages to preserve the balance of power within the Jewish community, it will be exposed to risks from another source. Zionism is beset with so many difficulties that it dare not burden itself with problems extraneous to it. The injection of political or economic issues into the movement is fraught with incalculable consequences for the future of the movement in this country. These issues are so extensive in their bearings and so vital in their manifestations that if superimposed on the delicate structure of Zionism they may crush it, never to rise again.

Zionism must, therefore, remain neutral. While including all Jews, it dare not identify itself with any section of them. It dare not be either a movement of the classes or of the masses. While holding scrupulously aloof from the issues which divide modern Jewry as part of modern humanity, it must keep its eye fixed on one point, the securing of a Jewish center for the Jewish people as a whole, in which the ills that afflict humanity may be cured in the prophetic spirit of justice and righteousness.

The practical conclusion of these considerations is clear. It is a plea for reconciliation, for a return to that Synthesis which was on the point of becoming the common ground of all American Israel. American Judaism needs peace to carry out the great task confronting it. Zionism is no less in need of peace in order to gain the hearts of those whose hearts are still Jewish. The very possibility of a conflict has bred a spirit of suspicion and unfriendliness which

falls like a blight upon every attempt at united action. The non-Zionists may succeed in defeating their opponents; they can never dispense with Zionism which is a driving force in American Jewish life. The victory may perch on the banners of the Zionists but they can never forego the assistance of the non-Zionists who still form the backbone of American Jewry. Representing the common longings of the Jewish people throughout the world, Zionism should serve as a leaven, quickening and stimulating the Jewish activities of this country, and rescue them from the greatest danger of Diaspora Judaism, the danger of provincialism, of falling away from the main body of universal Israel. In the particular situation confronting us Zionism ought to assert the claims of Palestine, in addition to those of the Diaspora. But the Zionists cannot replace the present agencies of American Jewish life, nor can they dispense with the cooperation of the non-Zionists. Such cooperation, based on the synthesis *Palestine plus Diaspora*, would be of equal benefit to both parties. Zionism and non-Zionism have only one real enemy: it is Assimilation, which preaches the suicide of Judaism. But all those who are concerned about the preservation of Judaism, in whatever shape or by whatever means, have the right to be recognized, if not as fellow-workers in Zion, at least as fellow-workers in Israel.

Lastly, if cooperation and harmony between the Zionists and the non-Zionists be permanently needed for the welfare of American Judaism, they are needed

a thousandfold now when the catastrophe which has overwhelmed the ancient centers of Jewry has turned the eyes and hopes of the whole Jewish world toward the Jews of this country. Ever since the Jews of Russia, fleeing from the wrath of the oppressor, began to wend their steps toward these hospitable shores, thoughtful European Jews have been looking upon America as the future center of the Jewish Diaspora. And as time progressed, as the numbers and the energies of the Old Jewish World assembled more and more in the New, American Jewry has been steadily advancing toward this exalted position of Jewish hegemony. But what, in the natural course of events, might have been the fruit of slow and gradual ripening has now been thrust upon us as the sudden result of the World War. Crippled European Jewry is now looking, and will look more and more, to the Jewry of America not only for comfort and support, but also for light and leading, for spiritual advice and guidance, and the Jewry of America, the only Jewry of consequence unscathed by the world struggle, cannot but assume the responsibility.

Nor is the Jewry of America at liberty to choose. There is an ancient Jewish legend which, with a subtle touch of sarcasm, tells us that when the Lord, having descended upon Mount Sinai, was about to bestow the Torah upon the Jews, the latter, shrinking from the obligations imposed by it, made an attempt to refuse the proffered gift. Thereupon the Lord lifted the mountain over their heads and angrily exclaimed: "If ye accept my Law, well and good. If not, ye

shall be crushed on the spot!" And the Jews, yielding no less to the promptings of duty than to the dictates of wisdom, quickly recanted and declared: "We will do and obey!" American Jewry will either be the leader of Jewry or it will not be. Let it fail to respond to the great call of history,—and it will unfailingly relapse into the obscurity and sluggishness of its former parochialism. This great world crisis will be either the making or the unmaking of American Jewry, and no Jew whose mind is unclouded by the ephemeral passions of party strife can do aught except ardently pray that the Jews of America may emerge in triumph from their supreme test.

XIX

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE JEWISH IMMIGRANT*

JEWISH immigration into the United States has for more than a generation proceeded in the main from the lands of Eastern Europe which in the course of the great world war have served as the battle-ground between Teuton and Slav. Competent observers of European conditions are strongly of the opinion that Jewish immigration from the same territories will at the close of the war assume even larger proportions than prior to it. Crippled by the terrible ravages of warfare and famine, of both of which they have borne more than their share, caught as in a vise between the conflicting aspirations of Russia, Germany and Poland, the Jews of Eastern Europe will, in the judgment of these observers, turn their hopes to these shores where they may be assured of a free human existence as part of the American commonwealth.

Be this as it may, at this serious hour in the history of our country, when America is engaged in the process of self-determination and is taking stock of the

* Published in the *Survey*, on May 5, 1917. The article is based on a memorandum submitted by the writer to his colleagues on the board of a leading Jewish institution engaged in Americanization work.

human and material resources at its disposal, the question of the adaptation of the immigrant population to the American environment calls for calm and careful consideration. And the Americanization of the Jewish immigrant forms by no means the least important phase of this great problem.

In discussing the question of the Jewish immigrant in relation to the American environment, I propose to dissociate it entirely from the general question of Judaism, about which there exists an infinite variety of opinion and emotion, no less among Jews than among non-Jews. Laying aside all personal convictions and associations on the subject of Judaism, I shall endeavor to view the problem before us from a position which is far removed from the battlefield of controversy: from the point of view of the humanitarian, who is interested in the Jews, not on account of his racial or religious kinship with them, but as a section of humanity to which he is bound by no other tie except that of a common mankind.

It would lead me too far afield to enter into a discussion of the immigrant problem at large. It will suffice for our purpose if we start from the premise which will be granted by all: that the solution of the immigrant problem consists in making the immigrant *cease* to be an immigrant, *i. e.*, in common parlance, in making the immigrant, who is a stranger in our gates, feel at home, and in transforming him into a happy and useful member of the new environment. As applied to the immigrant problem in this country, it means the Americanization of the immigrant, in the best and loftiest connotation of this term.

The solution of this problem is a twofold one. On the one hand, it is of an external nature. We must endeavor to acquaint the newly arrived immigrant with the conditions of the new land and to enable him to fight successfully in the struggle for existence, so that he may obtain and assume his rightful share in the benefits and responsibilities of the country which he has chosen for his abode.

The second solution of the problem is of an internal, or spiritual, character. Perhaps it may be best formulated as the attempt to restore the equilibrium of the immigrant. Equilibrium has been defined as "a condition of equal balance between opposite or counteracting forces." In the life of the body the most important sense, without which animal life is practically impossible, is the sense of equilibrium, that sense, as has well been said, "by which we have a feeling of security in standing, walking, and, indeed, in all the movements by which the body is carried through space." In spiritual life the equilibrium of man, with the possible exception of a few geniuses, is the product of the social forces of his environment. As long as man remains within his natural surroundings, he is endowed with this sense of equilibrium—whether we call it habit, tradition, or association—which gives him the feeling of security in all functions of life. For the environment dictates to him his form of speech, shapes his thoughts, colors his sentiments, determines his manners and customs. In the case of the immigrant, *i. e.*, of the man who has been detached from his accustomed environment, this equilibrium is disturbed. He is deprived of the

constant, though unconscious, guidance of his social group, and the result is the same as in the life of the body when the sense of equilibrium is impaired: he loses his feeling of security; he reels; he is swayed to and fro by the slightest touch of the new environment; he becomes unnatural and unhappy. Unless he be a man of exceptional ability, the most valuable in him, his personality, the outcome of long years of breeding and training, is destroyed, and he is in danger of becoming a moral wreck, a menace to himself and a menace to his neighbors.

The solution of the problem, therefore, must consist in the restoration of his equilibrium, in the recreation of a social environment for him, which, among the puzzling conditions of the new land, would offer him that spiritual anchorage which his former environment had provided for him; in making him again the unit of a social group, the mandates of which he could obey, and in enabling him to regain the sense of security which had formerly guided him in all the functions of life.

The Jewish immigrant problem in its internal or spiritual aspect—its external phase, which is a matter of common agreement, may well be left out of consideration—is essentially the same, except that it is greatly aggravated and complicated by the peculiar conditions of the environment from which the Jewish immigrant comes. For it is obvious that the greater the divergence between the old and the new environment of the immigrant, the greater must be the disturbance of his equilibrium. The English-speaking immigrant, the Scandinavian, or the German, whose

former environment is culturally similar to our own, find it comparatively easy to adapt themselves to the new conditions in this country. The Italian, the Slav, the Syrian, find this adaptation increasingly difficult.

Now it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that in no case is the contrast between the old and the new wider and deeper than in the case of the immigrant Jew. For the Jewish immigrants, who in their overwhelming majority hail from the lands of ancient Poland, from western Russia, Galicia and partly from Roumania, come not only from countries whose general civilizations are vastly different from that of our own land; but they come, in addition, from a purely Jewish environment, which in itself is radically different from the non-Jewish environment of the country in the midst of which it is situated. In most of the towns from which the Jewish immigrant hails the Jews form the bulk of the population and live entirely apart from the non-Jews. There are localities—some of them the writer remembers from his early associations—in which the only non-Jewish resident is the Shabbes goy (the gentile who assists the Jews in their domestic arrangements on the Sabbath day), and in which the approach of the Sabbath is still heralded on the market place by the Jewish beadle.

It is absolutely essential for us to realize the full character of this Jewish Ghetto environment if we may ever hope to solve, or even to mitigate, the difficulties confronting the Jewish immigrant. It is generally known and taken for granted that the

sum and substance of Jewish life in the former environment of the immigrant Jew is the Jewish religion. To a large extent this is correct, but it is necessary to bear in mind that religion, as conceived by Judaism and as carried to its extreme consequences in the development of Polish Judaism, is infinitely more than what is associated with it in the modern world. Religion from this point of view is co-extensive with that which in modern parlance goes by the name of social and cultural life. Judaism, in this formulation, regulates practically all the functions of life, even those which the Christian would never think of associating with religion, such as food and drink, as well as the manners and customs of every-day life. As a result of this development, the immigrant Jew possesses his own language, or rather languages. For, while using Yiddish as a vernacular, he employs Hebrew not merely as the language of prayer and study, but also, to a very considerable extent, as a medium of literature and correspondence. Both languages (Yiddish to a lesser degree than Hebrew) are regarded by him as part of his religious tradition. He wears in his homeland his own form of dress, which is no less hallowed by religious associations.

In a word, religious tradition dominates the entire range of his social life, which is thus, except for the external points of intersection with the economic and political factors of the outside world, wholly and exclusively Jewish.

This all-embracing influence of the Jewish religion is even more marked in the domain of his educational activities. For in a country in which compulsory

education is unknown and in which the striving of the Jew for general culture is cruelly hampered, Jewish education is limited, almost by force, to the study of Judaism, as represented by the Bible, and still more so by the Talmud and post-Talmudic literature. The extraordinary love of learning which, inculcated by Jewish religious tradition, is characteristic of Eastern European Jews to a truly astonishing degree, and the one-sided limitation of these intellectual endeavors to the literary sources of Judaism, have resulted in the evolution of a peculiar Jewish mentality and, if I may use the expression, of a peculiar Jewish sentimentality, which marks off this type of Jew from his Christian fellow-citizens as well as from his co-religionists in other lands.

True, in recent times a large number of Jews in Eastern Eurpoe have drifted away from the religious moorings of Judaism and have become indifferent and even hostile to religion. But it would be a serious mistake to regard this estrangement from the Jewish religion in the light of the West-European or American tendency of Jewish assimilation. These radicals or freethinkers are in most cases just as keenly interested in the preservation of Jewish distinctiveness as are the old-fashioned orthodox Jews, except that what the latter regard as a mandate of the Jewish religion the former justify by the authority of Jewish nationalism.

This Jewish isolation which, as has been pointed out above, covers the whole domain of life, has undoubtedly bred grave defects which considerably mar the complexion of the immigrant Jew, such as pettiness,

suspiciousness, hyper-sensitiveness and hyper-cleverness, excessive individualism, lack of organizing ability, disregard of externalities, often resulting in uncouthness and uncleanliness, and other shortcomings of this kind. But it has at the same time been productive of positive characteristics, which to the outsider are perhaps less palpable, because, unlike the others, they do not lie on the surface, yet are of immense intrinsic value and far more than make up for his defects: his extraordinary mental vigor, his unconquerable thirst for knowledge, his boundless respect for learning, his passionate love of liberty, his profound sense of justice, his power to endure suffering, his frugality, his genuine warm-heartedness, and a variety of other virtues which are best evidenced by the fact that his enemies openly justify their cruelty by his enormous superiority over the native population, a superiority which he has been able to maintain in the face of inconceivable misery and persecution.

It may now be realized in what a terrible conflict the Jewish immigrant must find himself when, having left his Ghetto environment, he suddenly emerges on the shores of the New World. Not only are the external conditions of life in this country diametrically different from those he had left behind, but the inner forces of life, the social and cultural influences, are no less conflicting. For the ideals which underlay the whole social stratification in his old environment were primarily of a Jewish character: Jewish learning and Jewish piety, *i. e.*, knowledge of the Jewish religion and the observance of its practices. These qualifications, far more than wealth, determined the position

of the Jew in his social group and provided the incentive for his rise and progress.

On arriving in this country, the immigrant discovers that they are not only valueless, but that they are a hindrance, and sometimes a nuisance, in the eyes of his fellow-men. We are horrified by the sight of physical cripples. But were it given to us, by some kind of spiritual X-rays, to perceive the fractures in the souls of men, we would be a thousand times more horrified by the sight of the untold numbers of mangled human souls which are writhing in inexpressible suffering in the midst of our Jewish immigrant population. No one except he who has an intimate knowledge of the conditions of old-fashioned Jewish life in the Ghetto can adequately appreciate the excruciating mental agony which the immigrant Jew must experience when, for instance, for the first time in his life he is forced to violate the God-given command of abstaining from work on the Sabbath day, or to transgress any of the Jewish regulations concerning food, which in his eyes are clothed with the authority of the Divine will. Nor can the outsider fully realize the inexpressibly tragic gap which opens up in the soul of the immigrant when he discovers that what he has held sacred and dear in the past is valueless, and less than valueless, in the eyes of his new neighbors. The result of this conflict is in innumerable cases a complete loss of equilibrium and the destruction of that feeling of moral and mental security without which a man is degraded into a beast, and life becomes a meaningless and brutal discharge of mere physical functions.

This change of environment has also another aspect which is more specific but which deserves mention in this connection because it is a prominent feature of the activities of the Americanizing agencies in this country. I refer to the social life of the immigrant in the narrower sense of that term. In the Ghetto, with all its economic misery, ample provision was made for the recreational phase of life. Social life, in the sense of sociability, strange though it may sound, was perhaps nowhere so fully developed as in the Ghetto. The *Beth Hamidrash*, "the House of Study," and, in the provinces in which the sect of Hassidim ("Fietists") prevail, the *Klaus*, or "Meeting House," formed the social center of the community, where the Jews met day in and day out not only for mental recreation, by studying jointly the sources of Judaism, but also for social entertainment, in the form of friendly chats, and very frequently of common meals, generally accompanied by singing and even dancing. The Jews of the Ghetto lived up, in very truth, to the biblical adage that "man doth not live by bread alone but by what proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord." For while they often lacked bread, they found supreme comfort and happiness in the study and contemplation of the word of God. As one who has had occasion to observe at close range the social and recreational aspects of Jewish life, not only in the heart of the Russian-Jewish Ghetto but also in the leading Jewish communities of western Europe and America, I make bold to assert that modern Judaism, with all its wealth and splendor, has nowhere been able to produce even the shadow of a

substitute for that invigorating and ennobling joyousness which the immigrant Jew found provided for him in the *Shi'ur* (Talmud course) given at the *Beth Hamidrash* or in the *Shalosh Se'udoth* (the Sabbath afternoon meal, mostly consisting of bread and herring) arranged in the Hassidic "Meeting House."

On arriving in this country the Jewish immigrant finds himself deprived of all these social stimuli. He may still cling to the outward forms of Judaism, if he can. But the spirit which gave them life and meaning has gone. Judaism had been to him like a beautiful painting, delighting his soul by the warmth of its colors and the loftiness of its composition. Now he discovers that the colors are rapidly fading, and that all that is left to him is nothing but a crude and colorless canvas, without beauty, without meaning, and without comfort.

This change of environment would perhaps not be so painful to the immigrant if, on arriving in the new land, he were to find a uniform and firmly settled culture, to which, with some effort on his part, he might become assimilated. This, however, is not the case. Life in the large American cities, and particularly life in New York, is neither uniform nor definitely settled. The immigrant cannot help being utterly confused by the disharmony and instability of the new environment. It is a matter of common knowledge that, when coming in contact with a new culture, men are invariably apt to notice and to imitate that which is superficial and therefore least valuable in it. This fact is well known to every student of the history of human civilization. One need only think of the

effect of French culture on the native masses of the Levant or of English culture on the inhabitants of India. In the interior of British South Africa one may come across natives in a state of complete nakedness, except for a silk hat and a colored waistcoat, which they evidently regard as the sum and substance of English civilization. The immigrant Jew, with all his mental agility, and with all his traditions of an ancient culture, can only see the superficialities of American life, and, not being steadied by the equilibrium of his own heritage, he seizes upon them as the true manifestations of the new environment.

While he does not, and indeed cannot, perceive the great ideals underlying the American commonwealth, he quickly enough notices those negative, though accidental, features which lie on the surface of American life: the hunt after the dollar; the corrupt state of politics; the hankering after publicity; the drift towards materialism; and he is forced to the dangerous and cynical conclusion that America—and here I merely repeat what one may frequently hear from the lips of Jewish immigrants—is the land of bluff; that religion, morality, politics, and learning are a sham; and that the only thing of value and power in this country is almighty mammon.

The result is obvious. The immigrants with a nobler fibre, in whom the traditions of the old environment are firmly rooted, are bitterly disappointed. They turn away in disgust from the new environment, which is utterly misconceived by them, and—here again I refer to a phrase current among this type of Jewish immigrant—they deprecate the memory of

Columbus for having discovered America, where their hopes for a happier and loftier existence have been cruelly deceived. Thousands of these immigrants would be happy to return to their native lands if external conditions permitted them to do so.

The others, however,—those who are of a cheaper mental grade—are quickly reconciled to the new state of things and, throwing off the former restraints of Judaism, are ready to play the game. They enter fully into what they believe to represent American life, and bring to bear upon it their innate cleverness and resourcefulness.

What then is the remedy for the evils attending this radical change of environment on the part of the Jewish immigrant—evils which, if not checked in time, may give rise to serious and complicated problems? To my mind, there is only one remedy: the restoration of the equilibrium of the Jewish immigrant. It goes without saying that we must acquaint the immigrant with the conditions of the new land, not only to strengthen him in his struggle for existence but also to enable him to realize the true foundations of American life and American culture. But it is just as important, if not more important, because more promising of results, that we make him again a social unit, that we recreate his natural environment for him.

Were it possible to make the Jewish immigrant a completely new man by uprooting all his previous traditions and habits, and by turning him into a full-fledged member of the American environment, one might feel inclined, looking at the problem from the

purely humanitarian point of view, to recommend the process of uncompromising Americanization—although even in this case, again from the humanitarian point of view, one would greatly regret the tremendous waste of mental and moral energy which this hot-house transformation is bound to entail, to the detriment of this country, which depends for its progress on the best that its citizens can contribute to it. But the Jewish immigrant, like all other human beings, cannot be made a new man. The human soul is *not* a *tabula rasa*. The impress of centuries is indelibly stamped upon it, and no mechanical process can undo the organic development of many generations.

Hence the only solution left to us is to reconstruct, or rather to help the Jewish immigrant to reconstruct, his old environment, to reawaken and reinforce the social influences of his former surroundings, so that they may once again provide him with guidance and inspiration, that he may once more possess himself of the sense of equilibrium, of that feeling of security which makes a man a normal being and his life a normal process.

It may be argued against this view of the problem that the remedy proposed in the foregoing might interfere with the Americanization of the immigrant, which, as Americans, we must all have at heart. But such an argument is fallacious. The influences in this country making for Americanization are so extensive and so powerful that, whatever procedure we may choose to adopt, the Americanization of the immigrant can only be retarded; it certainly cannot be checked.

But even if this handicap in the process of Americanization were real, it would be infinitely less harmful than the dangers lurking behind a de-Judaized and superficially Americanized Jewish immigrant population. The writer for one, and here again he is speaking purely as a humanitarian, prefers the kaftan-clad old-fashioned Jew, with his unattractive appearance and ungainly manners, whose whole life is dominated by the ideals and mandates of an ancient religion and civilization, whose mind has been cultivated by the subtleties of the Talmud and whose conduct is regulated by the restraints of the *Shulhan Arukh*, to that modernized amphibious creature, the gaudily attired, slang-using, gum-chewing, movie-visiting, dollar-hunting, vulgar and uncultured, quasi-Americanized "dzentleman."

It is obvious, therefore, that our method of Americanization—an Americanization which is constructive and not destructive—must consist in restoring the impaired or destroyed equilibrium of the immigrant Jew by enabling him to recreate for himself his former environment. It is not enough that we tolerate his old Jewish associations; we must call them forth where they are dormant and strengthen them where they have become weakened. Of course, we do not wish to reproduce the old Jewish Ghetto in the new land. Nor does the Jewish immigrant desire it. The immigrant who flees to this country as a haven of refuge and is anxious to throw in his own lot and that of his children with the new land is fully alive to the obligations imposed upon him by American life and citizenship. Those who are intimately acquainted with the

life of the immigrant in his old and new home, and do not base their judgment on ignorance and superficial observation, are frequently amazed at the readiness with which the immigrant Jews make concessions to the American environment. With few exceptions, even the most conservative and most backward among them are happy and proud to entrust their children to the American public school, although in their old country they had shunned the secular school as a de-Judaizing agency. They have scarcely touched these shores when they throw off their ancient costume which in Eastern Europe is the peculiar mark of their race and is hallowed by the tradition of centuries. They are eager, perhaps more so than other immigrants, to acquire the English language, and though they themselves may fail in these endeavors, they watch with delight the linguistic progress of their children.

In a word, the immigrant Jew does not object to the modifications of his old mode of life which are necessary to harmonize it with American conditions. But he insists, as he has a right to insist, that these modifications do not encroach on the essential character of his religious tradition. We must then adapt the immigrant Jew to the new environment, but we must do so cautiously, gently and sympathetically, ever alive to the dangers of a rapid and artificial Americanization which may destroy old values without building up new values in their stead.

And it is just as obvious that those entrusted with the task of Americanizing the Jewish immigrant must be men and women who know and understand him. It would seem preposterous that we should

have to insist on such a truism were it not for the fact that in the practical execution of the work of Americanization this simple demand is so frequently disregarded. A person who would set out to cure the bodily ills of his fellow-men without an adequate knowledge of the structure of the human body would be scorned as a quack. But where human souls are concerned, it would almost seem as if ignorance were bliss. Constructive Americanization must be based upon knowledge. Only an intimate acquaintance with the life of the Jewish immigrant in his old and in his new environment, only a full understanding of his mentality and psychology, and an adequate appreciation of his traditions and associations, may succeed in bridging the terrible chasm between his past and present, in creating a proper outlet for the immense stores of energy that lie dormant in him, and thereby transforming him into a happy and valuable citizen of our great republic.

The humanitarian method of dealing with the problem of the Jewish immigrant may perhaps be best illustrated by a striking utterance of the late Yiddish writer, Sholom-Aleichem, a subtle observer and powerful portrayer of Jewish immigrant life. Addressing himself to those who are engaged in Americanizing the Jewish immigrant, he reminded them of the fact that the biblical injunction commands us to *love* the stranger. To *pity* him is not enough. Pity may suffice in the case of animals; it cannot satisfy the needs of human fellowship. It is only by loving the stranger that we may ever hope to solve the delicate task of transforming his soul without destroying it.

XX

DUBNOW'S THEORY OF JEWISH NATIONALISM*

THE purpose of this lecture is to invite you to think with me for a little while about one of the most important problems of Judaism and to examine the different ways in which the solution of this problem has been attempted. To divert you from practical work, and take up your time with abstract speculations, may seem inopportune in a country like ours where time is money, and money is the standard by which time is valued—doubly inopportune with a society like yours, which is "endeavoring" in the cause of Judaism, and may possibly object to let its healthy hue of resolution be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. It is true, the strong inclination towards theorizing and philosophizing which is characteristic of the old type of Jew has frequently hampered the active life of our people. But the lack of theory peculiar to the modern Jew has certainly had far more disastrous results. It is due primarily to this want of a sound theoretic basis that our activity is without plan and policy, that our development lacks steadiness and system, that our enthusiasm consumes itself like a straw fire, and that our energy

*Address delivered before the Jewish Endeavor Society in New York, May 7, 1905. Published in the *Maccabean*, vol. VIII, p. 243 *et seq.*

is wasted in single, disconnected actions, born of the moment and lasting for the moment. The Jewry of today is like a ship without a rudder, whose course is determined not by her guiding forces from within, but by the whims of the weather from without. Winds and waves toss her whithersoever they like and a momentary calm is apt to stop her motion altogether. To be sure, the passengers cannot be expected to concern themselves with the course of the ship. But the officers, who have the management of the vessel in hand, are in duty bound to be clear about her course and to pursue it. Let the mass of the people satisfy its desire for activity in noisy little doings which bear no fruit. You, the intelligent representatives of the people, have to seek the unifying idea behind the variegated multitude of single actions. Let us therefore leave for a moment the valley with its embarrassing, often meaningless, details, and ascend the lofty height, which will grant us an outlook over the whole. Having surveyed and ascertained our position, we shall descend and resume our practical work with greater enthusiasm, but also with greater steadiness and therefore with greater success.

I said before that the problem we have to consider to night is one of the most important Jewish problems. To be more exact I should have said that it is *the* Jewish problem, all the other innumerable problems of Judaism being merely a direct or an indirect consequence from it. It is the problem which touches the very root of our national existence, the problem—to put it in the words of an ancient Judaeophobe—of "a nation dispersed and divided," or—to express

it in the words of a modern Judaeophile—the problem of "Israel among the Nations." The existence of the Jews in the *Golus*, in the Dispersion, scattered all over the countries of the globe, and having no country of their own, settled among all the nations of the earth and at the same time forming a nation of their own, has ever been a mystery which has puzzled and terrified the whole world. Upon the non-Jews this nation without a land made the chilling impression of a spirit without a body, and this ghastly terror found its expression in the uncanny legend of the "Wandering Jew," who owes his existence to a curse, who longs for death but is unable to attain it.

The non-Jews, however, soon became accustomed to the sight of this spirit, and began to banish it by means which were very far from spiritual. But how did the Jews themselves look upon their existence in the Golus, which to them was not merely an abstract problem but a source of incessant and indescribable suffering? For the Jews the doctrine of Judaism had a solution in readiness almost simultaneously with the appearance of the problem itself, and the marvelous, vitalizing force of this solution is shown by the fact that the Jews are alive today. This solution is usually called "Messianism", but, in view of its ultimate objective, it may be more properly termed "Zionism," though the name is only of recent date. It simply puts the problem aside—by declaring it anomalous and temporary. The dispersion, the Golus, is a punishment which God has inflicted upon his people for its sins. As soon as the people will have atoned for these sins, God will send his messenger, the

Messiah, to bring them back to Zion, where they will live "as in the days of old and as in ancient years." Just as the great Prophet of the first Babylonian Exile proclaimed: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her appointed time is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins,"—so the Jews of the second, greater Exile prayed, less eloquently perhaps, but not less fervently: "On account of our sins we have been exiled from our land and removed from our soil. Our Father, our King, reveal the glory of thy Kingdom over us, and appear and arise before the eyes of all living, and bring together our scattered from among the nations and gather our dispersed from the ends of the earth." The anomalous character of the Jewish Golus has been lastingly impressed upon the mind of the Jew, by means and in ways which still excite our greatest admiration for the marvelously deep psychological insight of our ancient teachers. Thus reducing the present to a transitory stage, to an opportunity for correcting the blunders of the past and preparing the glory of the future, this doctrine made the Jew indifferent towards the influences of the outside world, and enabled him to feel happy and live independently amidst outward misery and slavery.

Modern Zionism is a continuation of the Messianic doctrine, without its theological egg-shells. Zionism, too, declares the existence of the Jews among the nations without a national center of their

own as an anomaly which has to be removed by every possible effort. The individual Jew may occasionally prosper in the Golus. He may become a *Kommerzienrat* in Germany, a cabinet minister in England, or an ambassador in other countries. But the Jewish nation as a whole can fully and normally develop only on its ancient, hallowed soil. Therefore, the efforts of the Jews must be directed towards creating a center in Palestine as a basis for their national development. The means, however, to which Zionism resorts are somewhat different from those employed by Messianism. Instead of, or rather alongside of, praying and studying, it tries to attain its end by more worldly contrivances, by a Congress, a Colonial Trust, a National Fund, an elaborate organization. But, like the Messianism of old, it makes the Jewish present tolerable by drawing courage and comfort from the Jewish past and looking for compensation and reward to the Jewish future.

Diametrically opposed to Zionism, both in its ancient and modern form, is the theory of Assimilation. In one respect, however, it agrees with Zionism, namely, in considering the existence of the Jews among the nations an anomaly which has to be disposed of. But, according to this theory, there is no need to go to Palestine in order to solve the problem. It can very well be solved on the spot. All that the Jews have to do is to give up their national individuality, to assimilate themselves to the nations among which they live and thus entirely disappear from the face of the earth. There are numerous forms of this doctrine of Assimilation, some of them trying to con-

ceal the ultimate goal. But whether they consciously or unconsciously deny it, at the bottom of all of them lies the idea of the complete decomposition of Judaism.

Both the doctrine of Zionism and the theory of Assimilation, if carried out in practice, present radical and the only logical solutions of the problem of Judaism. In spite of this, or rather, as we shall presently see, owing to this, neither of them can boast of having taken a firm grasp on the bulk of the Jewish people. Their strength—in being radical and logical—has become their weakness. For human life is not regulated by logical considerations, but by psychological requirements. Assimilation proposes to give up the Jewish individuality; but the bulk of our people still possess a deeply rooted Jewish consciousness — sometimes unconsciousness. Zionism recommends to the Jews to leave the nations among which they live and make themselves independent; but the Jew of today is too intimately connected with the life and activities of his neighbors to be able to renounce them. Jewry is dangerously ill: Assimilation proposes suicide; Zionism recommends transportation to a healthy climate. But the patient has still too much vitality to commit suicide and too little energy to bear transportation. The only remedy, therefore, which he is in a position to accept is one which will not take him out of his place, and will yet enable him to maintain his life. In other words, the only theory which in the present stage of Jewish development is likely to meet with enduring success among large numbers of our people is a compromising

solution, a solution which, by declaring the Jewish Golus a normal condition, will allow the Jews to continue their present relations with their neighbors, and at the same time preserve their Jewish individuality,—to remain "among the nations," but still continue to be an "Israel."

An attempt in this direction has in modern times been undertaken by a theory known under the name of the "Jewish Mission." This theory, usually associated with the opinion that the Jews are not a nation but merely a religious community, violently denies that the Golus is an anomaly. On the contrary, it passionately declares that the Dispersion is a blessing for which the Jews have to be grateful to their Maker. God scattered the Jews all over the world, not as a punishment for their sins, but as a reward for their religious superiority, in order that they might become missionaries to all the nations of the world and teach them the lofty truths of pure Monotheism and morality. By virtue of their mission, the Jews are in duty bound to remain in Exile and direct their endeavors towards "converting" their neighbors to the principles of which they are the only legitimate guardians.

This doctrine has numerous adherents on both sides of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, I frankly confess that it costs me a considerable amount of effort to speak about it seriously. To begin with, this belief has no root whatsoever in the Jewish past. It is true, a Jewish mission, or rather the expectation that the principles of the Jewish religion will extend their influence over the non-Jewish world, is often

spoken of in the literature of the Jews; but never with the addition that to this end the Jews have to give up their own national center. The prophets, to whom the champions of the Mission theory refer with special fondness, were passionate lovers of the Jewish land, and the Great Unknown Prophet, who more eloquently than all others preached the idea of a Jewish Mission, spoke in most affectionate and most enthusiastic terms of the return of the Jewish people to its old home. Of course, the late origin of a theory is in itself no final indictment against its correctness. But there is another fact which is even more apt to arouse our suspicions,—I refer to that most significant fact that the theory of a Jewish Mission is entirely unknown in those countries where the Jews still live a genuine Jewish life and cling with all their might to Judaism, and that its influence is entirely limited to Western Europe and America, where the Jews have more or less loosened the ties connecting them with their tradition and, instead of being the missionaries and teachers of the nations around them, have become their most docile and submissive pupils.

It is an easy task to expose the hollowness of the logical foundation upon which this belief rests, but it is scarcely necessary. I have simply to point to one fact, which is sufficient to deal the death blow to the whole theory. A doctrine or a conception may often seem questionable and unfounded from an objective point of view. But the power of appeal it has for its adherents, the influence it exercises upon their minds and, consequently, in one way or another, upon their lives, justify it subjectively. Such a

doctrine may not be true as a logical idea; it becomes true as a psychological conviction. But does the theory of a Jewish Mission, which lays upon the shoulders of the Jews the most difficult task ever undertaken by any nation, exert the slightest influence upon the life and activity of the individual Jew or of the Jews as a whole? I think I need not answer this question. You may use a microscope for your investigations, and you will not be able to detect the faintest trace of any living effect of the doctrine of a Jewish Mission upon the Jews, except for some meaningless outpourings in the pulpit and press. A theory which is so absolutely barren, which has failed so utterly to lay hold on its own adherents, and cannot even claim the merit of a deep conviction, is doomed of itself, and cannot be reckoned among the attempts to solve problems of actual life. Yet, however baseless and fruitless this theory may be in itself, it is extremely valuable to us as a symptom, showing the great, nay, the burning need for a doctrine which will reconcile the Jew to his present position among the nations.

The first serious attempt to satisfy this burning need is, as far as I am aware, the theory of Jewish Nationalism propounded by the man whose name is indicated in the title of this lecture—by S. M. Dubnow.

Dubnow, I hope, is no stranger to you. Most of you have probably read his brilliant little volume on Jewish history which was issued by the Jewish Publication Society a few years ago, and has met

with considerable success in this country,—with much greater success, in fact, than the German translation had previously had in Germany.[1] I may mention in passing that, both as an historian and a writer, Dubnow occupies a commanding position in Russian-Jewish literature. Using the Russian language as his medium of expression, Dubnow has published numerous contributions of great scientific value to the history of the Jews, and is now issuing a comprehensive work in several volumes on Jewish history. But though occupied with the past of the Jews, Dubnow at the same time eagerly watches the Jewish present, and his numerous articles on burning Jewish questions, which he examines with the far-reaching, unbiased eye of the historian, belong to the best that has been produced along these lines in any language. His views on Jewish Nationalism—the subject of this lecture—are but slightly touched upon in the little English volume mentioned before, but they are fully and elaborately developed in a long series of essays which appeared between 1897 and 1902 in the Russian-Jewish monthly *Voskhod*, under the title, "Letters on Ancient and Modern Judaism."[2]

[1] "Jewish History. An Essay in the Philosophy of History," Philadelphia, 1903. The English translation was prepared by Henrietta Szold from the German translation of the present writer, which, in turn, was made from the Russian.

[2] The essays have since been collected and published in revised and amplified form, St. Petersburg, 1907. Prior to this publication the first two "Letters" were translated into German by the present writer and issued as a separate volume by the *Juediseher Verlag*, under the title *Grundlagen des Nationaljudentums* (Berlin, 1905.)]

The analysis of his theory which is given in the following is primarily based upon these "Letters," but, in order to render the analysis more concise and more transparent, I shall try to handle the subject as independently and as unconstrainedly as possible.

The name by which Dubnow designates his theory is "Spiritual Nationalism,"—and in these two words he presents to us in a nutshell the leading thoughts of his doctrine, clearly distinguishing it from the other solutions of the Jewish problem. "Nationalism" defines the Jews as a nation, which is separated, or rather differentiated, from all other nations and claims an independent national development. The attribute "Spiritual" characterizes the Jews, in distinction from all other nations, as one which is kept together solely by spiritual means and, therefore, needs no territory nor other political agencies for its existence. The former term implies a protest against Assimilation; the latter indicates opposition to Zionism.

Let us examine a little more closely the views imbedded in these two words.

By hoisting the flag of Jewish Nationalism, Dubnow voices his opposition not only to the theory of Assimilation, which hopes for the disappearance of Judaism, but also to that other doctrine mentioned before which proclaims that the Jews constitute merely a religious community and belong, with regard to racial affinity, to the respective nationalities among which they live. In his "Letters" Dubnow dwells at length on this view and tries to refute it in detail. If I were delivering this lecture in Germany or in a

country influenced by German thought, I would be compelled to devote a great deal of attention to this question, in view of the fact that the conception of the Jews as a religious community, evolved in Germany by Moses Mendelssohn, has still a large number of ardent champions in Europe. But here in America, and especially in this city, where members of all races of the world live peaceably together, and where the Jew who feels tempted to attach himself to a non-Jewish race has an embarrassing choice, extending over the wide stretch between the big-bodied Irishman and the pig-tailed Chinese,—here the Jews must acknowledge their race against their own will.

But is Nationalism in general and Jewish Nationalism in particular compatible with the highest ideals of morality, with the universal brotherhood of man? An objection of this kind can often be heard from Jews on either side of the Atlantic, and from the most high-minded and big-hearted among them. The fact itself that such an objection is raised is most significant, and strikingly illustrates the crippled state of our inward life. If you were to ask the member of any nation, however small and insignificant, whether he is able to justify his attachment to his nation by abstract speculation, he would probably laugh at you or, even more probably, would fail to grasp your meaning altogether. But feelings that are a matter of course with other nations have first to be sifted philosophically and filtered ethically before they can get access to the minds of the Jews. It is for this reason that Dubnow discusses this question with great earnestness and detail in various parts of his Letters.

His arguments on this point may be summed up as follows: A nation is a collective individual, *i. e.*, while consisting of many single members, it constitutes a sharply marked type, a national personality, with special characteristics, special habits, aims, and ideals which distinguish it clearly from any other collective individuality. The freedom of the individual person has become an axiom in all civilized countries, has become, as we ought to add, the cornerstone and capstone of this great Republic. In the same way the freedom of the individual nation, its right of independent existence and of the untrammeled development of its characteristics must become an established truth among the nations of the earth. Those that are opposed to Nationalism on account of the repulsive forms which it sometimes assumes are just as short-sighted as the rationalists of the eighteenth century who rejected all religion on the ground that it had been so frequently abused. In former times when liberty was identified with equality, the justification of Nationalism, which assumes the inequality of national types, could be doubted. But modern thought, which proclaims the right and necessity of differentiation, looks upon every attempt to equalize or obliterate individual and national characteristics as most disastrous to our civilization. We pay our tribute of recognition and admiration to the man who fully asserts and develops his own individuality and we object to him if he tries to achieve it by destroying other individualities. The same criterion should be applied in national life. We ought to distinguish between national Individualism

which endeavors to preserve and defend its own nationality, and national Egotism which is aggressive and tries to suppress and annihilate other nationalities. The latter is immoral; the former is not only justified, but is a moral duty. Jewish Nationalism, in its essence spiritual, is naturally confined to a defensive course, and is, therefore, in perfect accord with the highest ethical standards. The Jew who allows his own national personality to be suppressed by any other nation not only acts himself against all ethical principles, but he also induces others to act in the same way.

> And only after having given sufficient thought to this obvious, simple truth, we realize how false a view of Nationalism has been held—and partly is still held—by the majority of advanced Jews in Western Europe and in Russia. How bitterly mistaken were we when in the name of "liberal" principles we condemned so true a liberal principle as the right of every historical nation to preserve its individuality. We have confounded two contradictory ideas with each other: national individualism and national egotism, forgetting that in the same measure in which the infringement of the individual freedom of another is immoral, the defense of one's own individuality is lofty and noble. While we were fighting for the principles of liberty and equality, we ourselves prompted the violation of these principles by renouncing our own national freedom in favor of another's caprice. Acknowledging the right of other nations stronger than ourselves to assimilate us or even to absorb us, we by this very admission justified the national egotism of these nations, whereas to our own nation we denied the natural right even of national individualism. And acting in this way, we fancied ourselves the knights of universal brotherhood, and cherished the hope that our national self-sacrifice—which, as a matter of fact, was not an action of magnanimity but of pusillanimity—would be rewarded by

> increased love and respect for us, until we were taught by experience that one acts respectfully only towards a *personality*, a character, but not towards a submissive creature which allows everybody to obliterate it.

Now that Nationalism has been stamped with the approval of Ethics, let us examine the peculiar nature of Jewish Nationalism. In order to understand Jewish Nationalism we have to establish first what national characteristics are in general and the way in which they gradually develop.

A nation, according to the definition of Dubnow, is an historico-cultural group, possessing, by virtue of its origin and the conditions of its development, certain traits of character, a certain disposition of mental and moral faculties and a certain stock of historical traditions, distinguishing it from other equal groups,—in short, constituting a characteristic collective *personality*.

> The national characteristics (*i. e.*, the traits of character, mental disposition and common traditions) develop by way of an independent evolution, covering various phases: (1) racial; (2) political: (3) historico-cultural; and (4) spiritual, and in particular, religious.

Racial characteristics are especially dominant in the primitive stage of a nation, when it is a nation only in the physical significance of the word (*natus*, birth, *natio*, a species, an aggregate of kindred families or tribes.)

In the next stage of development the *political* feature comes into prominence. A common territory and state, which together constitute the idea of a fatherland, knit the members of a nation closely to each other and preserve their national unity.

The highest degree of national development is attained by the rise of *historico-cultural* and *spiritual* forces.

> Common historical recollections, habits, inclinations, emotions, beliefs and ethical ideals, the fruits of national productiveness—all this binds the members of a nation to one another with the strongest ties. This is what we call the "National Spirit." This spiritual individuality it is for which every nation, having gained self-consciousness, fights when threatened by the intrusion of strange elements.

In point of fact, these spiritual forces exercise an enormous influence and form the principal basis of national unity even in the political stage of national development.

> Yet there are cases when a nation is compelled to renounce for a long time, or for ever, the protective shell of political independence. Such a contingency is the touchstone of national feeling. If a given nation, in consequence of a long historico-cultural development, has become so greatly strengthened in spirit that it feels able to maintain itself as an original national entity, despite the lack of political independence and territorial integrity—such a national group has attained the highest degree of national evolution. It is a sharply marked collective individuality which cannot be obliterated. A fluid body needs a vessel, and receives from it its shape. But the same fluid, when hardened and crystallized, has no need of any vessel.

To this class of highly developed nations belong the Jews. Their racial characteristics are predominant in the early period of their development, in the times of the Patriarchs and the Judges. The political element comes into prominence in the period of the Kings and—after a long interval—in the age of the Maccabees. But at the same time the spiritual character of the Jewish nation is thoroughly emphasized by the prophets. Having lost their political

independence, the Jews have been held together by spiritual ties exclusively, and the remarkable strength of these ties has been demonstrated by the experience of two thousand years.

> We are the members of a peculiar historico-spiritual nation which has shown its ability to get along without political independence. We are bound together by something which is stronger than political unity, by the unity of origin, by common historical evolution, common traditions, recollections of the past, hopes for the future—in short, common individual traits and feelings which characterize the indivisible entity, called Jewry. In the course of centuries, as generation followed generation, similarity of historical fortunes produced a mass of similar impressions which have become crystallized, and have thrown off the deposit that may be called 'the Jewish national soul.'[1] History has created a certain spiritual ground under our feet. By further developing upon this ground, we shall continue to be a nation full of original creative powers. By breaking away from this ground, we shall lose our individuality and that unrestricted power of productivity which is inherent in every plant only in its natural soil.
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> Accordingly, the Jews form a nation, which endeavors to preserve its individuality and originality. Having, however, been deprived for a long time of one of the material prerequisites of a nation—the unity of a state,—the Jewish nation, in distinction from others, has to be recognized as an historico-spiritual nation. The lack of a substantial political element in Jewish Nationalism is not a sign of its weakness, but of its extraordinary power. A national unit, which has been able to maintain itself without the shell of political independence for a period of nearly two thousand years, and under the most unfavorable conditions, besides—such a unit must be declared firm and indestructible.

But is Jewish Nationalism compatible with the fact that the Jews are scattered among other nations?

[1] See Dubnow, Jewish History, Philadelphia, 1903, p. 28.

Is not the idea of a separate Jewish nationality subversive of the citizenship of the Jews in the different body politics?

In discussing this question, Dubnow is fully aware of touching the vital spot of his whole theory. The solution which he offers to this grave problem is most ingenuous and fascinating.

The assumption that the Jews, while forming a distinctly separate nationality, cannot be at the same time loyal citizens of their respective states, rests on a grave error which is extremely dangerous,—to wit, the identification of State and Nationality. In former times the state was identified with religion, one creed assuming the role of a "dominant church," while all other forms of religion were more or less cruelly oppressed. The disastrous effects of this identification of State and Church hardly need to be dwelled upon before an assembly of American citizens. After a long and passionate struggle, the civilized countries have at last achieved the separation between Church and State, and nowhere is this separation more successful and complete than in this great Republic. But the idea identifying State and Nation and recognizing only one "dominant nationality," which is entitled to suppress all the other nationalities of the same body politic, is just as erroneous and certainly just as dangerous. In fact, the countries with only one nationality are the exception. By far the majority harbor a population consisting of different nationalities, be it by way of conquest, as in Russia or Austria, or by peaceful compact, as in Switzerland or America. Where the state identifies itself with one nationality and tries to suppress, or

oppress, the others, the result in political life is a series of disasters,—compare Austria and Russia. Where the state recognizes the equality and inner independence of all nationalities, the political order is safely and easily maintained—see America and Switzerland. Therefore we must clearly distinguish between state and nationality, as has long been done with regard to state and religion. Where this distinction has not yet been made it is sure to be made in the course of natural development. The spheres of state and nationality are altogether different and do not clash with each other.

> The state is a formal union; nationality an inner union. The members of the former are united by common interests; the members of the latter by common feelings and inclinations.

Looked at from this point of view, "Israel among the Nations" becomes a natural and normal phenomenon. The Jews can at the same time be faithful citizens of their respective states and devoted members of their scattered nationality.

The question is often raised whether the Jew can be a *good* citizen, a patriot—we must not forget that Dubnow is speaking here as a European; in America I hope nobody will dare to doubt the loyalty of the Jew. But he who puts such a question, retorts Dubnow, should be referred to the other politically dependent nationalities, like the Irish in England, the Finns in Russia, the Bohemians in Austria, the Poles in the three different countries among which they are divided, and so on. A member of such a nation, provided his nationality be given equal rights and equal freedom of development with the other

nations of the state, can be a faithful, nay, a devoted citizen of his country, a patriot. Wherever his national rights are trodden down, and his national existence threatened, his patriotism will correspond to the treatment he experiences.

Let us take the Poles as an instance. The Poles are surely most ardent members of their nationality, which is divided between Russia, Austria and Prussia. Nevertheless the Pole in Austria is a good citizen of the Austrian Empire and takes an active part in its political life, while in Russia and, since recently, in Prussia his loyalty as a citizen is doubtful. The Jew, of course, whom the experience of past ages has taught to appreciate a home, is more modest in his demands, and is a good citizen even where he is not properly treated. But he is by no means bound to be so from the standpoint of justice and morality. The obligations of the individual towards the state are binding only so long as the state lives up to its duty: to defend the life and property of the individual. So it is with the nation. One would scarcely expect the Armenians to love the Turkish Government, whose only care for its Armenian subjects manifests itself in butchering them. Why should one demand Russian patriotism from the Jews in Russia? Such a demand is unjust, inhuman, preposterous. But that the Jews, whenever treated humanely and protected in their individual and national life, can be patriots, sacrificing life and treasure for their country, hardly needs demonstration outside of Russia.

One might perhaps raise the objection that the Jews are different from other politically dependent

nationalities, inasmuch as the latter live on their own territory, whereas the Jews have no claim to any territory in Europe.

The mere possibility of an objection of this kind excites the indignation of Dubnow, the historian. He plunges into a lengthy historical investigation to show that the Jews have both an historical and moral right on European territory, equal in its validity to that of any other nation. The Jews colonized Western Europe as Roman citizens long before the modern nations came into existence, and even in Russia we find the Jews at the threshold of Russian history. Poland was developed and civilized mostly by Jewish endeavors, so much so that when in 1539 the rumor spread that the Jews of Lithuania intended to emigrate to Turkey, the Polish king, as sovereign of Lithuania, ordered a strict investigation and was appeased only when he had convinced himself that the rumor was unfounded. And to make a special addition for America: there were Jews on the ship which carried Columbus to the New World, and for two hundred and fifty years the Jews, arriving in small and in large numbers, have contributed their best towards the upbuilding of this mighty republic. The fact that the territory claimed by the Jew is not confined to definite portions of Europe, as is, for instance, the case with the Poles and the Bohemians, but extends all over the continent by no means weakens the right of the Jew to consider himself an aboriginal inhabitant of Europe. The Jews in the Middle Ages were not persecuted because they were considered strangers, but as natives who professed an heretical religion. But

now that the nations have separated their political life from the religious, the Jewish people, though remaining a separate nationality, can be, and ought to be, at the same time a fully recognized member of the family of European nations.

In emphasizing so strongly the necessity of a separate and independent development of the Jewish nation, Dubnow might be charged with particularistic tendencies, with attempting to erect a new spiritual ghetto, instead of the old ghetto of brick and mortar. Dubnow decidedly repudiates this charge.

> Under no circumstances do I advocate artificial isolation and separation. I maintain that the Jews and the Christians should by all means get nearer to each other, *but on equal terms*. The Jew in approaching the Christian shall not *subordinate* his own national individuality to the national individuality of the other, but both shall *co-ordinate* themselves, in obedience to the highest demands of justice. If the Christian declines friendship on equal terms, then the Jew with self-respect will stop his efforts and live for himself. This you may call separation, but it is compulsory separation, aiming at the maintenance of individual freedom and national honor.

On the ground of all the preceding expositions, we may draw the following general consclusions:

> Jewish historico-spiritual Nationalism is not in contradiction to the general political duties of the different portions of Jewry in different states. Just as every man can be a loving member of his family and at the same time a citizen of his country, so also every group in Jewry, while gravitating towards the common national family, and championing its interests, can at the same time partake in the political life of the country and devote itself to its welfare, provided, of course, that the Jews enjoy complete equality of rights with the other sections of the population. Thus the Jews all

over the world do not form a *state in a state*, but a *nation among nations*, an historico-spiritual nation among the political nations.

During the era of our first emancipation of 1791 we have fought merely for our *civil* rights in the European countries. Now the time has come to claim also our *national* rights, which, as has been shown above, are in complete accord with the legal and civic position of various sections of the Jewish nation in Christian countries. The historico-spiritual Nationalism of the Jews has in its inner essence no aggressive, but an exclusively defensive tendency. What we demand is but a respectful attitude towards our national personality, towards our religion, our historical traditions, the best features of our national life. We claim that right of a genuinely independent development of our inner life which has been conceded to all other politically dependent nations.

These, in short, are the leading principles of Dubnow's theory of Jewish Nationalism, as far as they are laid down in the first two fundamental "Letters on Ancient and Modern Judaism." In the following "Letters" Dubnow tries to show how these principles are to be applied in practice. He demands that our education be established on such foundations that, instead of making the Jew, as it does now, spiritually and culturally a stranger to his own people, it should satisfy completely both the religio-national and the civil wants of the Jew, and he insists that wherever the Jews are kept back from carrying out this purpose they should establish national schools of their own. He advocates a separate political Jewish party in those countries in which all the other nationalities are equally organized, and he quotes with evident satisfaction the half sarcastic, half contemptuous rebuttal of Mark Twain to a Jewish lawyer in Austria

who had boasted to him of the fact that the Jews were the only nationality in the Dual Empire which had no political party of its own. In short, he maintains that all our national activity should be ruled by the principle of Autonomism, *i. e.*, of a genuine autonomous Jewish life as far as it is in agreement with the political life of the country. I would largely exceed the limits of a lecture were I to go into further details, and must, therefore, confine myself to these few meagre indications of the practical consequences of his theory. I should only like to add in a general way that the ideas of Dubnow, which at the time when they were first uttered were of a purely academic character, have assumed enormous actual importance in the recent turn in Russian political life. The representatives of the new movement expressly advocate the freedom of the inner life of every nationality living on Russian territory, and the Jews, though still deprived of their most primitive human rights, demand not only their rights as men and citizens, but they also openly and manfully present their claims to an independent existence and development as a nationality.[1]

* * *

[1] As an example—*unum pro multo*—I may mention the fact that at the convention of Russian journalists which took place in St. Petersburg on April 18-21, 1905, the following resolution, moved by the representative of the Russian-Jewish organ *Voskhod*, was unanimously adopted: "The convention deems it necessary expressly to demand equal civil and political rights for the Jews, as well as the right of the Jewish people to cultural-national self-determination, such as the autonomy of the school, communal self-government, and freedom of the national lan-

Dubnow himself, as has been alluded to before, considers his theory of Jewish Nationalism a synthesis between Assimilation and Zionism, combining the merits and avoiding the defects of both. But placing the center of his theory in the conception of a National Judaism, he is naturally more favorably inclined towards Zionism, which presents this conception in an inaccurate shape, than to Assimilation, which denies this idea altogether. Yet, in spite of his sympathies, his opposition to Zionism is well-defined. In two "Letters," especially devoted to this purpose, and in several passages in his other "Letters," he tries to explain and justify his negative attitude toward Zionism. His argumentation may be summed up in the following two assertions:

First, the ideal of Zionism is unnecessary, since Jewish Nationalism, being of a purely spiritual nature, needs no territory of its own. Zionism like paganism of old cannot conceive a lofty abstract idea without embodying it in an idol.

Second, Zionism is impossible, since its ideal can never be realized.

As for the latter objection—the impracticability of Zionism—I think it will never be refuted by arguments but only by facts, and it will last so long as Zionism does not throw off its "ism" and become

uage." [An account of the struggle of Russian Jewry for national rights since 1905 will be found in the forthcoming third volume of Dubnow's "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland." In the same volume will also be found a later formulation of the author's doctrine of Spiritual Nationalism, or National-Cultural Autonomism, which, as a result of the Russian revolution of 1917, is approaching its realization.]

Zion. As far as the former argument is concerned—the superfluousness of a separate territory for the Jews,—I am sure its fallacy can be demonstrated convincingly. But I have no intention to enter here the field of Zionist polemics. This lecture, though arranged by the Propaganda Committee of the Federation of American Zionists, does not pursue any Zionistic tendencies. Zionism is not the narrow program of a party, but a whole *Weltanschauung*, which can be acquired only after prolonged mental and psychological endeavors. I do not believe in Zionists who are won by a single lecture, and bitter experiences of late with easily-gained Zionists have made us more skeptical than ever in this respect. Zionism must, first of all, be based unconditionally upon the recognition of Jewish Nationalism, and I frankly confess that the Jew who acknowledges the necessity and legality of a genuine development of the Jewish national spirit, but does not care for a separate territory, appeals to me more strongly than the Zionist who preaches the necessity of a territory, though it only be as a *Nachtasyl*, and is not concerned about the national spirit of Judaism. The purpose of this lecture will therefore be successfully achieved if it will lead some of you to consider, and a few of you to acknowledge, the theory of Jewish Nationalism in the form given it by Dubnow. This theory is perhaps not altogether new. I should not wonder if many of you were to tell me afterwards that they had always felt the same way. But it is the merit of a theory that it raises our unconscious feelings to conscious ideas, and in this new shape converts them

into powerful living agencies. The doctrine of Jewish Nationalism, if duly recognized, will be of great benefit both to Jews and non-Jews. By declaring the Jews to be a nationality it purifies the Jewish atmosphere of the stifling church air, which is deadening to every fresh immediate impulse, and places our activity in the broad daylight of national life. By defining exactly the relationship between nationality and citizenship it gives us that frankness and uprightness which is inseparable from manhood and dignity.

But Jewish Nationalism will also be of benefit to our neighbors. I lay special emphasis on this point, for the reason that it carries a particularly strong appeal to the Jewish mind. The Jews are extravagantly altruistic in their public life and care far more for the interests of others than for their own interests. The majority of those Jews who try to get rid of Judaism do not do so because their Jewish feelings have been weakened, but from the mistaken notion that their national death is a prerequisite of their love for their country, for the Jews too belong—

Zu dem Stamme jener Asra,
Die da sterben, wenn sie lieben . . .

The theory of Jewish Nationalism, which proclaims that the productivity and, therefore, usefulness of the Jew stands in exact proportion to the strength of his Jewish consciousness, will convince them of their error. It will show them that their national self-immolation is not only superfluous, but also harmful, standing on the same line with the suicide of the blue-jacket in Heine's story who, in his anxiety to demonstrate his affection for his captain, threw him-

self into the sea, shouting, "I'm dying for Captain Jackson!" Instead of sacrificing themselves Jewishly, these Jews would do better to lead an active, vigorous Jewish life—in the interests of Captain Jackson. A Jewish population, deeply rooted in its national soil, clinging to the traditions of a great past and upholding the ideals of a still greater teaching, will be a most valuable and stimulating factor in the public and civic life of any country. A Jewish element, inwardly un-Jewish, without the backbone of national tradition, and without the hold of a national hope, is of little value to its country,—only an arithmetic addition to the numbers of its population. The thinking Jew, in examining the different solutions of the Jewish problem, cannot be in doubt. Accepting the doctrine of Assimilation, he will be lost to himself and lost to his surroundings. In taking up and carrying aloft the banner of Jewish Nationalism, he will be a blessing to himself and a blessing to the other nations.

XXI

AHAD HA'AM*

AHAD HA'AM is one of the very few Jewish names which have broken through the boundaries of the Empire of the Czars and have gained a certain amount of publicity and recognition in the West. Goethe described the attitude of the Germans towards the French in the famous epigram:

> The German does not like the Frenchman,
> But he likes to drink his wine.

The attitude of the European and American Jews towards the Jews of Russia is the exact reverse of it. The European and American Jews feel keenly for their Russian brethren. They are deeply interested in their fate; they collect, with unparalleled generosity, enormous sums to alleviate their distress—in fact, the whole public life of the Jews outside of Russia is dominated by their solicitude for the Russian Jew. But—his wine they do not drink. They flatly refuse to accept anything from him. They barely know what he is able to offer them. To be sure, to give is more blissful than to take, but such one-sided generosity creates benefactors and shnorrers, never friends and brothers. The Jews of Russia have spiritual goods in their possession of which the Jews of the

* Paper read in the Course of Public Lectures at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, February 8, 1906. First published in *The Jewish Exponent*, February 16 and 23, 1906.

West are sorely in need, and which would amply suffice to compensate their Western brethren for their generosity, were but the latter willing to accept this form of compensation. And yet such compensation is absolutely necessary. For only then when the relations between the Russian Jews and the Jews outside of Russia will have abandoned the basis of one-sided charity, and will have assumed the form of a mutual exchange of goods, only then when their attitude towards one another will be wholly pervaded by the principle *do ut des*, "I give on condition that you give,"—only then, and not before, will the intercourse between these two sections of Jewry become a source of blessing for both of them and prove of lasting benefit for the development of their common Judaism.

Ahad Ha'am, the pseudonym under which Asher Ginzberg has become known to the public, signifies in Hebrew, "One of the People." It was under this unpretentious name and claim that Ahad Ha'am entered the field of Hebrew literature. This name is now interpreted by many, with a slight violation of Hebrew grammar, as "*the* One of the People." It may be said without exaggeration that Ahad Ha'am is the national hero of Russian Jewry, at least as far as its intellectual elements are concerned. This promotion from a man of the people to a national hero Ahad Ha'am does not owe to his writings. The people love, admire, worship their literary pets, but, if they are merely writers, never raise them to the height of national heroes. The unique position of Ahad Ha'am in Russian Jewish life can only be accounted for by his personality.

Ahad Ha'am typifies the ideal of the modern Russian Jew. We listen with attentive ears and trembling hearts to the terrible physical sufferings of our Russian brethren. But we are utterly ignorant of those inaudible, yet equally terrible mental sufferings of the modern Russian Jew, whose mind is the battlefield of two hostile cultures, whose development—if this wild, hazardous zigzag course can be called a development—leads from Heder and Yeshibah to College and University, whose soul is divided between Rabbi Joseph Caro and Herbert Spencer, who can say in the words of Rabbi Judah Halevi, though in a somewhat different meaning, "my heart is in the East, but I am far in the West." Much, if not the whole, of the restlessness of the modern Russian Jew, his impatience, his occasional lack of balance and want of simplicity, which so often mar his wonderful characteristics, can be attributed to this gigantic mental struggle. Ahad Ha'am is the first who has victoriously emerged from this struggle. He is the first in whom the two hostile cultures have been brought into harmony, in whom they organically pervade and influence each other. He is thoroughly Jewish and thoroughly modern. He combines the *Ma'or she-ba-Torah*, the luminous ideals of Biblical and Talmudical Judaism, with the noblest elements of modern civilization. He personifies that mental balance, that poise of mind, that harmony of soul, so characteristic of the old Jewish *Talmid Haham* and of the ancient Greek philosopher, but in broader outlines and in richer colors, being the harmonious outcome of manifold and contradicting influences.

This spiritual make-up of Ahad Ha'am assumes a most striking aspect through two traits, closely related to each other, which are of purely Jewish origin and, like everything that is great in Judaism, have their source and highest embodiment in the Prophets.

Ahad Ha'am has himself defined these traits in a few epigrammatic sentences:

> *The prophet is a man of truth.* He sees life as it is, and absorbs its impressions with no personal bias. He tells what he sees exactly as he sees it, with no side-calculations. He tells the truth not because he is willing to do so, or because he has found out that he is obliged to do so, but because he is forced to do so, because it is a trait characteristic of his nature, a trait from which he could not emancipate himself, even if he would.
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> *The prophet is an extremist.* He concentrates his mind and heart upon the ideal in which he finds the purpose of life. He would subjugate life to this ideal to the utmost limit, without any remnant whatsoever. Within his soul he carries a complete ideal world in accordance with which he endeavors to reform also the external world of reality. He recognizes with the utmost clearness that so it must be; and this is sufficient for him to demand, with all the power he commands, that so it shall be. He will listen to no excuse, he will yield to no compromise, nor will he desist from his wrathful chiding, though the whole world rise against him.[1]

Ahad Ha'am, too, is a man of truth and a man of extremes. Truth to him stands not only above his individual interests, but also above the interests of his party, nay, above the interests of his people. He

[1] Compare the translation of Ahad Ha'am's article "Moses" in the Reform Advocate, September 23, 1905. [See now Leon Simon's translation, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1912, p. 311 *et seq.*]

looks upon every compromise as a half truth, and therefore as contradictory to truth. The public and literary activity of Ahad Ha'am is one continuous manifestation of this love of truth. When, after the first anti-Jewish riots in Russia, the best elements of Russian Jewry rushed into the movement, known as *Hibbath Zion*, "Love of Zion," in which they saw the only way to their salvation, Ahad Ha'am, though himself devoted to the cause with heart and soul, seeing that it had assumed a wrong direction, daringly checked the national enthusiasm, and, entering for the first time the arena of literature, fearlessly proclaimed, "This is not the way?"[1] At a time when all the Hebrew writers and public men in Russia pictured the Jewish colonies in Palestine in the rosiest colors to inspire the people with hope and courage, Ahad Ha'am, after having investigated the conditions on the spot, wrote his famous "Truth from Palestine," which is now commonly recognized as truth, though, when it first appeared, it filled the whole Jewish public of Russia with rage. When modern Zionism arose and attempted to captivate the Jewish masses by promises which lacked reality, Ahad Ha'am was again the only Jew in Russia, who raised his voice of warning, though he could easily forsee that he, to whom the ideal of Zion was the blood of his heart and the breath of his nostrils, would be branded as a traitor to Zion. In fact, almost every article from Ahad Ha'am's pen was felt by the people as a slap in their faces, and called forth a flood of violent protests. Ahad Ha'am may be compared in this re-

[1] *Lo ze ha-derekh*, the title of his first article.

spect with his countryman Tolstoi, with this important distinction, however, that when Tolstoi became a teacher of truth he had long been the literary favorite of his people, whereas Ahad Ha'am began his career by preaching the truth.

Ahad Ha'am is an iconoclast, a destroyer of idols. Yet he could never exercise the powerful moral influence which now emanates from him, were he merely a destroyer, were he not at the same time to replace the broken idols by great and inspiring ideals. In fact, Ahad Ha'am's criticism and pessimism is only the reverse of his lofty idealism. It is merely because he weighs reality in the balance of ideals, that he finds reality so terribly wanting. With the same indomitable courage and uncompromising spirit with which he detects the negative sides of life he untiringly points to the heights of positive idealism. He is—to use Ahad Ha'am's own expression—a pessimist and an optimist at one and the same time; only that his pessimism attaches to the present, whilst his optimism refers to the future.

As to the private life of Ahad Ha'am, the source and touch-stone of man's true greatness, those who know it can say without hesitation that it is in perfect harmony with the picture presented by him in his public activity. To them the only epithet which would seem best fitted to sum up his whole moral personality is that of saintliness. I believe there is no shade of exaggeration or poetical license in the magnificent tribute which was paid to Ahad Ha'am several years ago by the great Hebrew poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik:

Since the day on which thy light descended upon us,
We have beheld in thee a lion of truth, a giant in spirit,
Of true convictions, chaste and pure, in open and secret,
Firmly holding his views, not dependent on the judgment of others,
Walking his lonely path, clear-sighted and energetic,
Keeping his flame alive in his innermost heart,
Watching with care God's glimmering spark in our midst.
And if ever it happens that even in our generation
Our Holy Spirit still sparkles, revealing itself in a Jew,
Then it has never shone brighter in any son of the Golus
Than it glistens and shines in thy great soul.

The biography of Ahad Ha'am contains little that will be deemed unusual by those who are familiar with the conditions of life in the midst of which the tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast languishes in the Empire of the Czars. Perhaps the only unusual element in his biography is the fact that he is one of the very few who were born there on the sunny side of life. For Ahad Ha'am has never known the sting of material distress which laid its deteriorating stamp upon many Hebrew writers of the last century. He was born in Skvira, a small town in the Government of Kiev, in the year 1856, of a wealthy and highly respected family. From his twelfth to his thirtieth year, in the course of eighteen years, he lived, with a few interruptions, on a neighboring estate, which, if my private information is correct, was leased to his father by Count Ignatyev, the author of the infamous "May laws" of 1882. In consequence of these laws, which deprived the Jews of the right of residence and land tenure outside the cities and towns, Ahad Ha'am and his family were forced to leave their estate in 1886 and settled in Odessa. He started life as a

merchant, but abruptly liquidated his business in 1895, for fear lest in carrying it on he might find himself unable to conform to the strictest standards of commercial integrity. Shortly thereafter he founded the Hebrew monthly review *Hashiloah*, which, under his editorship, soon became the rallying point of the best elements in Hebrew literature. However, fruitful as this editorial activity was from the literary point of view, it failed to satisfy his inner self. Brought up, as Ahad Ha'am was, in the ancient traditions and ideals of the Jewish *Talmid Haham*, he smarted under the compulsion of using his literary activity as "a spade to dig with." It must, therefore, have been a great relief to him that he was afterwards able to hand over the management of the *Hashiloah* to one of his disciples and enter business life again. He now occupies a leading position in a large Russian tea firm, in which his faculties as a business man are greatly appreciated.

The mental development of Ahad Ha'am has its numerous parallels in the modern history of Russian Jewry. It passed over the same wild and adventurous road which many thousands of Russian Jews have taken, but very few have traversed successfully, without injury to their soul or body. Ahad Ha'am received a thorough Jewish education after the old fashion. As early as at the age of seventeen he had covered the entire Talmudic literature, and, almost a boy, was already looked upon as an authority on Rabbinical lore. His studies, however, were by no means confined to Rabbinics. Those who know him admire his stupendous erudition in every branch of Jewish learning. The study of Jewish mediaeval

philosophy seems first to have stimulated his skepticism and to have called forth a desire for modern education. Here, however, he was left entirely to his own resources. The only secular knowledge he then possessed was limited to the Russian alphabet, which he had mastered while a boy of eight, without the knowledge and the consent of his parents—by deciphering the signs on the stores of his native town. He was thus compelled to acquire the elements of modern education by self-study. At a later age he went to Austria and Germany for a short time, but the limits of college and university were much too narrow for him, who was already a mature thinker and scholar. Ahad Ha'am is thus a regular autodidact, his mental faculties having made a teacher superfluous. Apart from his Jewish erudition, Ahad Ha'am's familiarity with modern culture is amazing, extending as it does over Russian, German, French and English literature. He masters completely the philosophic and scientific thought of modern Europe and America, while displaying a special liking for the English thinkers, whose cast of mind, marked by lucidity and soberness, is so much akin to his own. He writes and speaks several languages, but the medium of his literary activity is exclusively the Hebrew language, considered by him one of the chief manifestations of the Jewish national spirit.

Ahad Ha'am's public activity was pre-eminently devoted to the *Hibbath Zion*, or "Love of Zion," movement, that pre-Herzlian form of Zionism, which sprang up after the anti-Jewish riots of 1880-1881, manifesting itself concretely in the colonization of Palestine. He was the first to lay down the theoreti-

cal foundations of the new movement, raising it from a limited practical enterprise to a broad national ideal. As a leading member of the "Committee for Granting Relief to Jewish Farmers and Workingmen in Syria and Palestine," he greatly influenced the practical work in the Holy Land. In the interests of the colonization movement he visited Palestine in 1891, 1893 and 1900, and each time presented to the public an unreservedly truthful account of the state of affairs which he had found to prevail there. He was also the founder and guiding spirit of the Zionist league *Bne Moshe*, "the Sons of Moses," making it the executive organ of his ideals. The league existed for eight years, from 1889 to 1897. Its history and program were made known to the American-Jewish public a short time ago.[1] The principal leaders of modern Russian Zionism belonged to this league, and I know some of its members who still speak of it with a kind of religious awe. Though not occupying any official post at present, Ahad Ha'am continues to exert a powerful moral influence on the public life of Russian Jewry.

Ahad Ha'am's literary activity is the immediate expression of his personality In the introduction to the first volume of his collected essays he modestly declines the title of a writer and describes himself as a guest in the temple of literature, entering it only for a special purpose and leaving it as soon as that purpose is accomplished. Ahad Ha'am wrote his first article at the mature age—especially mature in Russia—of thirty-three, and now after a literary activity of

[1] Compare the article of Henrietta Szold in the *Maccabaean*, May, 1905.

seventeen years his essays fill but three not very bulky volumes.[1] In reading Ahad Ha'am's writings one perceptibly feels that to him the temple of literature is really —a temple, a place for holy service, and not a market, as it so often is to other writers. In the course of his long literary career, Ahad Ha'am has never defiled his pen by personal polemics, and, while criticising movements and ideas, he has always, with the refinement of the true aristocrat, refrained from attacking their authors. The reverence displayed by Ahad Ha'am for literary work strongly reminds one of the old-fashioned type of Jewish scholar to whom writing was "a work of the Lord," performed only "for the sake of Heaven." Ahad Ha'am only writes when he has something to say. He is always prompted by some actual problem of Jewish life. He is essentially a publicist, though he is as far removed from the ordinary type of a publicist as a while-you-wait photographer is from a great painter. His purely philosophical essays are very few in number, and even these betray to the watchful eye their inner relation to actual life.

Ahad Ha'am purposely limits his literary activity to Jewish life. But here his boundaries are as wide as the Jewish Diaspora. Nothing Jewish is alien to him, whether it takes place in Russia or outside of it. Whether great or small, nothing escapes his vigilance. An attempt to arrange a Sunday service in England, an address before the Societé des Études Juives in Paris, a literary movement in Germany, a newspaper utterance in Bulgaria, a speech on the importance of

[1 A fourth volume has since appeared. See later p. 423, *et seq.*]

manure in Palestine—everything is the object of his attention and comment. But dealing with the transient interests of the day, Ahad Ha'am has an eye for their eternal substance. As the X-rays pass the porous materials and stop only at solid metals, so does Ahad Ha'am, with marvelous penetration, strip every passing incident of the accessories of Time and Space, and uncover its lasting significance and value. The best evidence of this unique ability may be found in the fact that, although the literary activity of Ahad Ha'am extends over a period of seventeen years—a long period in the life of a modern nation, particularly so in the life of the Jewish nation, with its rushing tempo and its catastrophies and cataclysms—not a single one of his essays has lost its former value and power of appeal.

The style of Ahad Ha'am is famous for its orginality. To Ahad Ha'am himself, who does not claim the title of a professional writer, the style is only of secondary importance, a medium to convey the contents. "Perfect the thought, and the thought will perfect the style"—is his advice to Hebrew writers. In fact, all the characteristics of his style, its incomparable conciseness and lucidity, its terseness, its pithiness, are the outcome of this desire to convey adequately his thoughts. But style is a matter of taste, and, as such, is more easily experienced than described.

The Hebrew diction of Ahad Ha'am is also of a most remarkable complexion. It has been said with a great deal of truth that the Hebrew of Ahad Ha'am is the best which has been written for the last two thousand years. Certain it is that Ahad Ha'am is the creator of a new Hebrew style which is becoming

more and more predominant in modern Hebrew literature. The basis of this style is not the Biblical language, which lends itself more to narrative and poetry, but the language of the Mishna and of the early Haggada. In reading the Hebrew of Ahad Ha'am, we feel ourselves transported into the midst of those deep-minded and big-hearted Jewish sages, who pour peace and harmony into our souls and make us forget the stinging problems of modern Judaism.

A few bibliographical remarks concerning Ahad Ha'am's writings may be of interest to the English reader.

Ahad Ha'am's essays—his literary work is practically limited to essays—appeared orginally in newspapers and reviews. The first volume of collected essays was published in 1895 and has now been issued in a third edition. A second volume appeared in 1902; a third volume in 1904.[1] Many of his essays have been translated into several modern languages. I know of German, French, English, Italian, Russian and Polish translations. Two years ago, a volume of Ahad Ha'am's selected essays was published in German by the *Juedischer Verlag* in Berlin.[2] I am privately informed that Professor Masaryk, in Prague,[3] is interested in a translation of this volume into Bohemian. In the English language, as far as I can see, about ten articles have been published in various newspapers. A volume of selected essays of Ahad Ha'am in English would be a most

[1] For the fourth volume see p. 423 *et seq.*]

[2] A second edition appeared in 1913, See below, p. 423.]

[3] The head of the new Czecho-Slovak Republic.]

precious contribution to Anglo-Jewish letters. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished.[1]

Having described the personality, the life, and the public and literary activity of Ahad Ha'am, I have only provided the frame, but the picture is still missing. I now have to supply this picture, *i. e.*, to expound the ideas of Ahad Ha'am. But here I am confronted by an *embarras de richesses*. Coming from the light-headed discussions in the columns of our newspapers to the weighty writings of Ahad Ha'am, we feel like a beggar who is suddenly transferred into a jewelry shop, and who is anxious to seize on everything, but does not know what to take first. The narrow limits of a lecture and the still narrower limits of human patience, however, are a sufficient guarantee against too great rapacity on my part. I will content myself with presenting to you that idea of Ahad Ha'am which is the centre of gravity of all his thoughts, in fact, as he himself confesses, is the fountain-head of his whole spiritual being—I mean the idea of Zionism.

Ahad Ha'am's theory of Zionism has been termed Spiritual, or Cultural, or Moral Zionism. All these adjectives, added to the noun, tend to mark its contrast to Political Zionism, as created by Herzl. The first article published by Ahad Ha'am contained a severe arraignment of the *Hibbath Zion* movement, with which he was associated as a most ardent follower and leader. Ahad Ha'am took part in the first Zionist Congress, convened by Herzl at Basle, but immediately afterwards, amidst a torrent of

[1] An English translation of Ahad Ha'am's essays by Leon Simon appeared in 1912. See later, p. 423, *et seq.*]

overflowing enthusiasm for Zionism, he placed himself outside the movement, and has since made it the object of his uninterrupted thorough-going criticism.

The source of his criticism in both cases, *i. e.*, as applied to the pre-Herzlian *Hibbath Zion* movement as well as to Herzlian Zionism, is precisely the same. It is indicated in the sentence of Montesquieu which stands as a motto at the head of the first volume of Ahad Ha'am's essays: "*There are certain truths of which it is not enough to convince one, but which one must also be made to feel.*" In this sentence is expressed the fundamental idea of Ahad Ha'am, the evolutionist, who discovers the mainspring of human actions not in cold syllogisms and theories, but in the inner workings of the human soul, in instincts and emotions. "Every belief or idea leading to practical deeds—this is the principle which Ahad Ha'am lays down in his first article—necessarily presupposes that the attainment of a certain end is a need felt in our hearts." "If you so desire, then it is no fairy tale"—this motto of Herzl's novel *Altneuland* precisely coincides with Ahad Ha'am's own convictions. There is no aim that cannot be reached if it is but strongly and energetically desired by a nation. Where there is a will, there is always, and has always been, a way: this truth is verified by the history of mankind in all its phases. A great aim requires a great desire; the more difficult the aim, the more ardent must the desire be. Zionism is an ideal, surrounded with innumerable and gigantic difficulties; therefore, the desire for it has to be boundless and gigantic. Both the old *Hibbath Zion* and modern Political Zionism neglect this absolutely indispensable condition. They both as-

sume that this desire already exists, and therefore begin at once to erect a national building upon this foundation. But they are both mistaken. The Jewish people at large do not desire it, do not desire it, at least, in proportion to the loftiness of the aim. The overwhelming majority of Zionists are only convinced of the truth of Zionism, but they do not feel it. Every practical undertaking, every structure reared on this foundation will necessarily collapse, because the foundation is not sufficiently strong to bear it. It is of no avail to attempt to cure our national organism with drugs and plasters, as long as the heart of the nation is weak and cold. He who has followed with some attention the happenings of modern Zionism from its beginning will be forced to admit the truth of this pessimistic prediction. Most enterprises in Zionism have failed, not on account of outward obstacles, but primarily because the proper desire, a desire which does not shrink from sacrifice, has been wanting on the part of the people. There have been many, too many moments of blazing enthusiasm, soon cooling down to ashes, but very little of that steady uninterrupted hearth-fire, which alone creates the strength required for a great task.

What then is the proper course to be pursued? The answer is clear. The foundation has to be strengthened. The *desire* for the aim, the source of all our actions, has to be developed and transformed into a powerful agency. We have to begin with *tehiyyath ha-lebaboth*, with "a revival of the hearts," by imbuing them with the "love of Zion," as pre-Herzlian Zionism was called, by infusing into them the fervent desire

for the attainment of the Zionist goal. "The concentration of the Jews in Zion—another fundamental maxim of Ahad Ha'am—must be preceded by the concentration of the hearts of the Jews in the love of Zion." The ideal of Zion must once more become the national ideal of the Jews, as it had been down to the time of Jewish emancipation, when it was sold for a mess of pottage—filling their hearts, shaping their thoughts, stimulating and directing their activities.

What, however, are the means by which this *tehiyyath ha-lebaboth* can be successfully accomplished? The answer can be easily forseen. The malady under which Zionism labors is not of an external, but of an internal, of a spiritual nature. Therefore, the remedy also must be internal, spiritual. It is the fatal mistake of Political Zionism that it uses nothing but external means, that it is but a "Zionism of paper: its beginning a program, its end a charter, its inside shares and stamps." The only means to revive the heart of the Jewish nation and prepare it for the gigantic task of Zionism is to make first the Jews—Jews, not negative Jews, who are Jews only, because they are not allowed to die, but Jews with a positive ideal, for which they are ready to live and struggle. We have to develop all the spiritual means in our possession in order to influence the Jewish soul. We have to strengthen the Jewish religion, Jewish literature, Jewish history, Jewish art—in short, all those manifestations of the Jewish spirit, which we compress into the one word "Judaism," or, in modern times, into the two words "Jewish Culture."

An important factor in the *tehiyyath ha-lebaboth* is also the colonization of Palestine. When the Jewish heart will be strong enough to serve as the foundation of a great national enterprise, then the colonization of Palestine will assume large proportions and become the chief instrument for carrying out the ideal of Zionism. Under the present conditions, however, the colonization of Palestine is chiefly of psychological value. In view of the gigantic dimensions of the material distress of our people, it matters very little whether a few hundred or a few thousand Jews enjoy their bread and butter in Palestine. But from a psychological point of view—as a means to strengthen the love of Zion in the hearts of the Jews—one well-established Jewish colony in the Holy Land with a genuine Jewish life is a most powerful agency. But at the same time Ahad Ha'am, in consistency with his views, is of the opinion that one Jewish college or one Jewish university in Palestine, which would give form and expression to Jewish culture, is of greater national importance than ten or even a hundred colonies.

Thus the development of Jewish Culture becomes a means—or rather *the* means—towards the Zionist end. But it is not only a means, it is at the same time an end in itself. For the Jewish centre in Palestine is only a frame for Jewish culture; it is not the ultimate goal. Here Ahad Ha'am abruptly turns from the road of Political Zionism. It is his firm conviction that Zionism will never solve the material problem of Jewry. With many anti-Zionists he believes that even after the establishment of a Jewish centre in Palestine the overwhelming majority of the Jewish

people will live outside of Palestine. The immigration into Palestine will never exceed, at least not for a period within the limits of human speculation, the natural increase of the Jews in the Dispersion. But on the other hand, it is not necessary for Zionism to solve the material problem, because this problem can be solved—and solved more easily and effectively—in other directions. The material misery of our people is not due to the Golus, to the fact that they are dispersed—we certainly have a larger number of Jewish millionaires at present than we ever had during the period of our political independence; it is due to the fact that the majority of our people is concentrated in the land of the Czar. The abolition of the Pale of Settlement in Russia, or the distribution of the Russian Jews over the globe, will do more towards alleviating Jewish material distress than the establishment of a Jewish centre in Palestine. On the other hand Zionism—and only Zionism—is able to solve the spiritual Jewish problem, the problem of Judaism, or, what is identical with it, the problem of Jewish Culture.

The views of Ahad Ha'am on Jewish Culture as the fundamental problem and ultimate goal of our national life represent the broadest and deepest that has ever been expressed on this subject, perhaps the broadest and deepest that has been expressed by Ahad Ha'am himself on any subject. I am compelled to limit myself to the main outlines.

The strongest bond that connects the individual members of a civilized nation is not the State, but its national culture, comprehending in its broadest sense the manner of living, the mode of thinking, the

language, literature, art, and all similar manifestations of the national spirit. The Englishman in the Transvaal and the Englishman in Canada are not united nearly as strongly by the solidarity of their political interests—which are different in the different parts of the British Empire—as they are by the spiritual ties of a common culture. The Germans in Austria feel themselves inwardly nearer to the Germans in Germany than to the Hungarians with whom they are politically united. The members of politically dependent nationalities are bound to one another almost exclusively by the ties of culture, as, *e. g.*, the Poles, the Czechs, and the like. During the two thousand years of the Dispersion the Jews were held together by means of their national culture, which was pre-eminently, but by no means exclusively, religious. The downtrodden *Schutzjude* in Germany and the powerful King of the Chazars, the proud vizier of Spain and the destitute beggar in Bagdad were one in spirit and sentiment. Though scattered all over the world, the Jews were one people, one strong organism. This solidarity was broken up by Jewish emancipation. The Jews joined the cultures of the nations among whom they live, and the culture of Judaism was left to its own fate. The greatest talents, the noblest minds of Jewry went to enrich the already rich spiritual treasuries of the other nations, while our own treasury became emptier from day to day.

> Our nation has only expenditures, but no income. It scatters the sparks of its genius in all directions. It constantly increases the wealth and glory of its enemies and oppressors, but itself derives no benefit from its labor. Our

national treasury is not swelled by the achievements of the great talents which it produces by its own strength.

Even the religion of Judaism, the last bulwark of the unity of Israel, has, as a result of Jewish emancipation, been fashioned after the cultures of the nations in whose midst we live, and there is scarcely anything in common between a Reform temple in America and an orthodox synagogue in Russia.

Thus the Jewish nation has been split up into a number of fragments which have nothing to do with one another. They differ in their thoughts, their sentiments, their habits, their aspirations, their ideals. Only sometimes the dim racial feeling is aroused in them by external persecutions, and the alliance between the Jews of different countries—one is vividly reminded of the old barbaric Asiatic rite—is only cemented through blood. The ties between the different sections of Jewry will necessarily be loosened more and more, and the disconnected parts—and with them the Jewish nation—will be easily and completely absorbed.

This danger can only be averted by one means: by creating a common culture which would once more unite the hearts of the Jews and make of them one internally connected national organism. This culture, however, cannot be established in the lands of the Exile where we are in the minority, and where, being unable to shut ourselves up in a spiritual ghetto as were our forefathers, the influences of the surrounding civilizations prevent the development of a genuine Jewish culture. The only way therefore left for us is to create a Jewish centre in Palestine, where our culture had its birth and its most glorious develop-

ment, where the Jews, relieved from external pressure, and freed from the crushing spiritual influences of the environment, could develop a culture of their own. This centre will not, and cannot, comprise all the Jews of the world. It will not be a material centre for the Jewish people, but it will be, what the Jewish nation pre-eminently needs, a *merkaz ruhani*, a Spiritual Centre, which will focus the hearts of the Jews upon one point, which will make of the Jews all over the world one united nation, which will hold them together, even as the magnet holds the scattered nails. For this purpose, for the establishment of a spiritual center, it will be sufficient if only a small part of the Jews, the best and noblest among them—those that are actuated by the ideals of their nation, and not by their own individual interests—will settle in Palestine and become to the Jews outside of Palestine the living personification of a new, vigorous, genuine Jewish life, resting on the broad foundations of human civilization, but tinged with the vivid colors of the Jewish national spirit.

This ideal of Ahad Ha'am is not the product of a speculative mind, but has its analogy in the past history of our people. When in the year 538 B. C. E. Cyrus granted premission to the Jews to return to their old home, only 42,360 took advantage of this permission. They were the minority, and Palestine was no more the land of the Jews. But it once more was the land of Judaism, and in this capacity became the spiritual centre of the Jews all over the world. It developed the old culture of Judaism along new lines and made it the vital principle of our existence which still keeps us alive today.

It has become clear from the preceding expositions that the spiritual, or cultural, or moral Zionism of Ahad Ha'am differs both in its basis and in its top, in its Alpha and Omega, from the purely political Zionism, advocated by Herzl. According to Ahad Ha'am, Zionism must begin with culture and end with culture, its consummation being a centre for *Judaism*; according to Herzl, Zionism must begin with politics and end with politics, leading to the establishment of a home for the *Jews*. This difference is not merely a disagreement in personal views, but a difference of two divers cultures. Herzl, the assimilated Western Jew, who was driven towards Zionism by external influences, had only an eye for the tangible appearance of the Jew. Ahad Ha'am, the unalloyed Russian Jew, who was driven towards—or rather kept within—Zionism by tradition and education, saw also, and saw first of all, the invisible, yet more valuable, soul of the Jew, as manifested in Judaism. From a philosophical point of view Ahad Ha'amism is far superior to Herzlianism. Oh the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the Zionism of Ahad Ha'am would never, and could never, have become a national movement like political Zionism. Ahad Ha'am's pen-name is, after all, a mere pretense. He is not the spokesman of the people. He is only the representative of that dwindling minority of the "few," who will always find it difficult to place themselves within a popular movement. Ahad Ha'amism in its integrity and totality must necessarily remain outside the boundaries of political Zionism, originated by Herzl. But as its counterbalance, as its vivifying and modifying principle, Spiritual Zionism is the

necessary complement of Political Zionism. And were I to name the two men who have had the largest share in shaping the destinies of the modern national movement, I would first mention its father—Herzl, and right afterwards its mentor—Ahad Ha'am.

* * *

I have dwelt at such length on Ahad Ha'am's theory of Spiritual Zionism, because it represents the very essence of his views on Judaism, and is the focus from which all his other views and convictions radiate. But I would be sorry were this to convey the impression that Ahad Ha'am's message is entirely confined to that theory. There is scarcely a Jewish problem of importance which has not been touched upon by Ahad Ha'am, and has not received through his magic touch a new and striking illustration. Among the problems to which Ahad Ha'am has given his attention there are many which are of special significance to the Jews in America. I am thinking at this moment of the problem of the Jewish religion and the fascinating light thrown upon it, at the hands of Ahad Ha'am, by the theory of evolution,—a subject which is of special interest in this country where evolution has degenerated into revolution and development into destruction. But it is not my intention, nor is it in my power, to exhaust all the possibilities indicated in the title of this lecture. If this lecture has had the effect that it has left you dissatisfied and has awakened in you the desire to apply for more information to Ahad Ha'am's own writings, then it has amply achieved its purpose.

XXII

SOME AHAD HA'AM PUBLICATIONS*

THE three publications indicated in the footnote strikingly illustrate Ahad Ha'am's unique position in the world of Hebrew letters. His collected writings, though merely reproducing essays which had been published, read and discussed previously, are yet read, or rather re-read, with undiminished eagerness by a constantly growing public. But Ahad Ha'am's influence is by no means limited to the Hebrew reading world. He is the only modern Jewish writer whose words find an echo in the whole Jewish Diaspora and penetrate the mysterious and impenetrable boundary which divides Jewry into East and West. It is significant that the first German translation, as well as the first English translation, of a neo-Hebraic work is connected with the name of Ahad Ha'am, and he who carefully observes public Jewish life in its practical manifestations will not fail to detect the

* The following article was first published in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, vol. iv (1914), in the form of a review of the following three books: (1) *Al parashat derakhim* ("At the Parting of the Ways"). Ahad Ha'am's collected Essays in Hebrew, Volume iv, pp. 247. Berlin, 1913. 8°. (2) *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha-'am.* Translated from the Hebrew by Leon Simon. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1912. pp. 347. 8°. (3) *Ahad-Ha'am. Am Scheidewege.* Erster Band. Aus dem Hebraeischen von Israel Friedlaender. Zweite verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage. Berlin: *Juedischer Verlag*, 1913. viii+271. 8°.

powerful, though silent, share of Ahad Ha'am's ideas in the shaping of Jewish reality.

This exceptional character of Ahad Ha'am's literary activity cannot be accounted for by mere literary merits, greatly and justly admired as they are. The secret of Ahad Ha'am's appeal to the Jews all over the world lies, so it seems to us, in the fact that his formulation of the Jewish problem is such as to appeal to universal Israel. For the Jewish problem had in modern times been always formulated and handled as a problem of *Jews*, and the problem of Jews, depending on external conditions, was, indeed, radically different in the East and in the West; all that one section had a right to expect of the other was sympathy, at most charity. But Ahad Ha'am's formulation of the Jewish problem as a problem of *Judaism*, as the supreme question of our spiritual existence, points out the danger which threatens all Jews alike and appeals to the deepest sentiments which lie hidden in the heart of every thinking Jew. No wonder, therefore, that the formulation of the Jewish problem as a problem of the Jewish spirit, or, as we say nowadays, of Jewish culture, possesses an irresistible attraction for all Jews, irrespective of origin and affiliations, and is now disseminated, as seen by the above publications, through the medium of the three languages which practically monopolize the higher literary output of Jewry.

The fourth volume of Ahad Ha'am's essays is largely made up of reproductions from the *Hashiloah*, still the most representative Hebrew magazine, and to a lesser extent from other periodicals. The only

new contribution consists in extracts from papers and letters bearing on the history of the order *Bne Moshe*, which at one time played an important, though silent, part in the development of the Palestinian movement. The volume concludes with a brief but helpful analysis of the essays contained in all the four volumes. It may be added that several of the essays in the fourth volume were translated into English shortly after their first publication.

As might well be expected, the bulk of the volume is devoted to the Zionist movement in the large sense in which the author interprets it. But even those who stand outside the movement will read with keen interest his article on "National Education," or his powerful, though cautious indictment of the Gymnazium in Jaffa. Those who admire Ahad Ha'am the man will find a reflection of his two-sided personality, cool, searching, implacable, yet loving, reverent and benign, in the beautiful, analyzing, yet touching necrologues on Lilienblum and Lewinsky. His article on the Russian revolution (p. 103) with its implacable logic and sharp-edged sarcasm will be read today, after his prophecy has become reality, with undiminished, if not heightened interest. His article on "The Question Mark of Judaism" indicates that Ahad Ha'am is a keen observer of Jewish conditions in America. His short essay on "Impudence" (p. 87), which clothes serious thoughts in a graceful and even playful form, shows Ahad Ha'am as the master of the essay. The emphasis, however, of the present volume lies no doubt on the two articles that stand at its head: "The Sovereignty of Reason" and "Between

Two Stools." By their subject-matter they are also the most interesting to the readers of the *Jewish Quarterly Review.*

"Between Two Stools" indicates the attitude of those Jews who waver between Judaism and Christianity.[1] The article is clothed in the form of a criticism of Claude Montefiore's *Commentary on the Gospels*, and gives Ahad Ha'am the opportunity to examine the cardinal differences between Judaism and Christianity. His analysis of the fundamental principles of Jewish ethics as contrasted with Christian ethics is probably the best and profoundest contribution to this momentous subject. The "impersonal" character of Judaism and Jewish ethics, its refusal to accept a human being as the embodiment of the ideal, the definition of "altruism" as "inverse egotism," the objectiveness of the Jewish ideal of justice as against the subjectiveness of the Christian conception of love, all these and many more thoughts, scattered throughout this brilliant study, and uttered with an exquisite beauty and lucidity of expression, show what a rich harvest this great and difficult subject may yield when handled by a master.

His essay on "The Sovereignty of Reason," which offers an analysis of the life-work of Maimonides and was called forth by his 700th anniversary, reaches even more directly into the domain of Jewish Science. By his vast erudition which extends over all branches of Jewish literature, by his wide historic outlook, by his wonderfully balanced judgment Ahad Ha'am

[1] An English translation of this article by Leon Simon appeared in the *Jewish Review*, London, September, 1910.

seems eminently fit to handle the tasks presented by Jewish Science. Surely the man who is able to interpret the present in the light of the past ought to succeed in making the past intelligible to the present.

But Ahad Ha'am has always fought shy of this province, and his essay on Maimonides remains the only attempt in this direction, an attempt which merely sharpens the edge of our regret by revealing possibilities which are consciously neglected. It is no exaggeration to say that the study on Maimonides is one of the most brilliant achievements of Ahad Ha'am's pen. All the great characteristics of his mind and style are shown to their best advantage in the treatment of a theme which has evidently been not only the object of close study but also of deep, one might say, affectionate interest. It is difficult to say what is more to be admired: the complete mastery over the material, the profound grasp of Maimonides' metaphysical doctrines, the original conception of the underlying principles of Maimonides' system of ethics, the subtle psychological inquiry into the connection between the life and system of his hero, or the crystal-like, one is tempted to say, Maimonides-like lucidity with which a subject accessible but to few is made intelligible and even palatable to the ordinary Hebrew reader.

Though this is not the place for polemics, yet it is only fair to state that, with all our appreciation of the superior merits of Ahad Ha'am's essay, we cannot agree to its fundamental thesis. The greatest achievement of Maimonides lies, as Ahad Ha'am indicates by the title, in the fact that he proclaimed

the "Sovereignty of Reason," that in a period, in which reason was made subservient to religion, he had the courage to make religion subservient to reason and to free the latter from all external authority. But this construction ascribes motives to Maimonides which are essentially modern and therefore an anachronism. To be sure, Maimonides believed in the sovereignty of reason, not, however, "because religion is not above reason, but beneath it," but because religion is *identical* with reason. Maimonides at no time doubted and on many occasions emphatically acknowledged the divine origin of the Pentateuch in the strictest sense of the word. This whole-hearted unquestioning acceptance, by a man of Maimonides' critical turn of mind, of a dogma which today is the first target of theological skepticism is in itself characteristic of the period and its scholastic way of thinking to which Maimonides paid his tribute no less than the great Mohammedan philosophers, Alfarabi, Avicenna, or Averroes. However this may be, the belief, logically pursued, means not the sovereignty of reason, but the sovereignty of the divine. That Maimonides was far more radical and far more successful in his rationalism than his predecessors is more the result of his pedagogic outlook upon the Bible which enabled him to see in the Scriptures a popular manual of philosophy,[1] and still more so of his marvellous exegetic skill which made the Bible yield Aristotelian truths. Maimonides was ready to sacrifice what he considered the outer meaning

[1 See "Maimonides as an Exegete," above, p. 193 *et seq.*]

of the Scriptures to the results of philosophy, but what his attitude would have been, if the utter incompatibility between the Bible and Aristotle had been conclusively demonstrated to him, is difficult to say. Fortunately for him this incompatibility was not and could not be demonstrated. At any rate, it does not seem to us admissible to make Maimonides responsible for a conception which lay completely beyond the horizon of his period.

The English translation of Ahad Ha'am offers a selection of essays culled from the three Hebrew volumes which had theretofore appeared. The essays chosen are of a more general and philosophic character, while those of a more decided publicistic tendency, particularly the articles containing Ahad Ha'am's criticism of Political Zionism were eliminated. The wisdom of this principle of selection is apparent, for it would have been purposeless to offer the criticism of a movement to a public to which the movement itself is little more than a name. The English translation —and only he who has tried the experiment knows the difficulty of rendering Ahad Ha'am's clear-cut and idiomatic Hebrew into another language—is an excellent piece of work. It is true to the language of the original and to the character of its own language.[1]

The third publication may finally be mentioned as an indication of the constant spread of Ahad Ha'am's influence. The German edition of Ahad Ha'am is one

[1] Here follow a number of criticisms and suggestions which have been omitted from the present volume.]

of the few Jewish books in German which have lived to see a second edition. Ahad Ha'am's essays have evidently taken a deep hold on a certain section of German Jewry, particularly among the academic youth. I am reliably informed that the Jewish student societies in Germany make the admission and promotion of their members—the Jewish societies follow the system of the German *Burschenschaften*—dependent on the study of Ahad Ha'am's writings. The German translation differs in its make-up from the English. It limits itself to selections from the first Hebrew volume, except for the last essay on Nietzsche (from the second Hebrew volume) which was added in the new edition. The essays selected are mainly of a publicistic character, bearing largely on the Palestinian movement, for the Jewish public in Germany is far better acquainted with that movement than it is in England or America. An introduction supplies the necessary biographical and bibliographical data and offers a short analysis of the principal ideas of Ahad Ha'am. The second edition has been carefully revised by the translator in conjunction with the author.

The *Juedischer Verlag* promises the publication of a second volume of Ahad Ha'am's essays which is in the course of preparation by a different translator.[1]

[1 This volume has appeared in the meantime but has not yet reached this country, owing to war conditions.]

XXIII

RACE AND RELIGION*

THE question as to whether the Jews constitute a racial or a religious community deeply agitates the mind of every thinking Jew of today. It has become the Shibboleth by which the various Jewish parties are distinguished from one another. Nor is it a question of pure academic interest. Like every real issue, it reaches deeply into life and profoundly affects all Jewish policies and activities. It is necessary, therefore, that those who take, or prepare themselves to take, an active interest in Jewish life should gain a clear conception of this fundamental problem and, throwing aside all commonplaces and catchwords, should arrive at a well-defined conviction regarding the character of the community whose destinies they desire to shape.

In order to gain the proper perspective, let us first question our history. How did the Jewish people look upon itself during the long procession of the centuries of its existence? Leaving aside for the moment the modern phase of Jewish history, which is after all a negligible quantity when compared with the long stretch of ages preceding it, we cannot hesitate as to the answer. As far as our past is concerned,

* Published in the *Intercollegiate Zionist*, a collection of essays issued by the Intercollegiate Zionist League, New York, 1910.

the Jews have never regarded themselves otherwise than as a sharply distinguished *racial* group, as a community which is knit together not merely by the bonds of faith, but also by the ties of blood. Whether the Jews are a so-called pure race, or whether they have experienced, as has every race in history, an influx of foreign blood, is a question which properly belongs into the domain of anthropology, and concerning which the anthropologists hold vague and contradictory views. But this much I believe will be admitted by all that only very few human races have displayed such jealous watchfulness in guarding the purity of their blood as have the Jews.

Be this as it may, the whole controversy centering around this point does not concern us at this moment. For the purposes of our present inquiry it is enough for us to know that the Jews have always *felt* themselves as a separate race, sharply marked off from the rest of mankind. The fundamental belief which bears the entire structure of Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism and the expression of which fills to overflowing the Jewish liturgy and literature of all ages is the conviction that the Jews are the common descendants of Abraham—"the seed of Abraham"—through Isaac and Jacob. Every act of national life is viewed in the light of this common descent. Palestine is the land of the Jewish people not primarily by the right of conquest or settlement; it is above all the *Promised* Land, and it belongs to Israel as an *inheritance*, by virtue of the Divine promise given to Abraham as the progenitor of the Jewish race. The Torah is not a doctrine or a body of doctrines accessible to all na-

tions, irrespective of their origin; it is "the *inheritance* of the congregation of Jacob" (Deuteronomy xxxiii, 4). The attitude of Judaism towards the non-Jew who was ready to adopt it differed in the different periods of Jewish history, in accordance with the conditions of the age. But it never was, as in other religious communities, purely a question of faith. Proselytes were seldom solicited, and even when ultimately admitted into the Jewish fold they were so on the express condition that they surrender their racial individuality and merge it in that of the Jewish community. The Canaanites were refused admission altogether. The Ammonites and Moabites were similarly excluded,—not from a religious motive, but for reasons that are intelligible only from the history of the race: because they had been hostile to the Jews during their wanderings. The Edomites and Egyptians again were admitted in the third generation when the racial fusion had already been accomplished. The Samaritans, who were half-Jews by race and who were eager to become full Jews by religion, were rudely repulsed by the founders of the second Jewish commonwealth, who were anxious to safeguard the racial integrity of the Jews. It was for the same reason that the Jews who had returned from Babylon were required to produce their genealogical records in order to prove that they had maintained the purity of the race while in Exile. The same motive prompted Ezra to demand, and his followers to make, the sacrifice, unparalleled in its severity, of dissolving the mixed marriages already contracted.

In post-Biblical times this racial exclusiveness of

the Jews became even more accentuated. The position of the Talmud is well known. A large part of the Jewish ceremonial as evolved in Rabbinic Judaism can only be explained as an attempt to preserve the racial purity of the Jewish people. Nor was this exclusiveness confined to the Jews who lived apart from the non-Jewish world. The free Hellenized Jews of Alexandria maintained the same attitude, and the Jews in the lands of Islam, who took an active and prominent part in the affairs of the Eastern and Western Caliphate, were, in their conception of the racial character of their community, in perfect agreement with their fellow-Jews in the narrow and secluded ghettoes of Germany, Italy or Poland. Any one who denies the racial conception of Judaism on the part of the Jews in the past is either ignorant of the facts of Jewish history or intentionally misrepresents them.

Thus Judaism or, more correctly, Jewry, as a community held together by the ties of blood and common origin, is fundamentally different from Christianity, Islam and other world religions which are universalistic in their tendency and address themselves to the whole of humanity, without regard to their racial or national affiliations.

There are people, and people in our own midst—in itself a sad proof of the extent to which assimilation is revolutionizing all Jewish standards and traditions—who regard this attitude of Judaism as narrow-minded and as inferior to the broad universalistic spirit of Christianity and the other world religions. These people who look upon Judaism with the eyes

of non-Jews utterly misjudge the true character of Jewish exclusiveness. They forget that the Jewish community, while separatistic in its means, is, as far as its aims and ideals are concerned, as broad-minded and universalistic as any other group of humanity. The Jews wished to live as a separate race, but they never wished and never tried to live for themselves. They conceived it as their very reason for existence to be of service to humanity, to be "a light to the Gentiles," "to improve the world through the Kingdom of the Almighty." The fundamental Jewish conception of Israel as a "People of God," or as a "Chosen People," implies that Israel was chosen for a task which far exceeded the limits of the Jewish race. But the Jews felt that they could benefit humanity far more effectively by asserting their individuality, by serving as a fountain-head whose living waters should quicken the other races, than by losing themselves among the nations and be lost to themselves and to the world. There may be a difference of opinion as to the efficacy of either method to influence mankind: by self-annihilation or by self-preservation. But there can be no doubt that the modern man who has been weaned from the hazy cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century and has been taught the value of differentiation and individualism cannot but admire the exclusiveness of the Jewish people, maintained at the cost of unparalleled suffering, and he will in fairness admit that it was this exclusiveness which has saved Israel's services for mankind, while any attempt at "broad-mindedness" would have put an end to the Jewish race long before those services began.

But to return to our subject. We have tried to prove, if, indeed, it needed any proof, that during the entire course of its history—always leaving aside its modern phase—the Jewish people has jealously maintained its racial distinctiveness. And yet, did the Jews look upon themselves solely and purely as a racial community? Far from it. Those who emphasize the racial complexion of the Jewish people in the past, to the exclusion of its religious character, make themselves guilty of the same perversion of facts as their antipodes who persist in denying the racial make-up of the Jews altogether. True, the common descent of the Jewish race from Abraham is a fundamental conception of Judaism. Yet the very selection of Abraham to become the progenitor of the Jewish race was prompted, according to this conception, by a religious motive: "that he may command his children and his household after him that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice" (Genesis xviii, 19). And the only *raison d' être* of the Jewish people, without which the existence of the nation seemed useless and meaningless, was based on the belief, formulated by the lawgiver and the prophets, and finally shared, though not always fully understood, by the masses, that the Jews were to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy people." Only a short time ago at a meeting, at which the question discussed in this article formed the topic of a heated controversy, the writer had an opportunity of listening to an eloquent Yiddish speaker who, in a fit of oratorical passion, appealed to the authority of all the great men in Israel, "from Moses the Lawgiver down to the

Gaon of Vilna," to vindicate his belief in the racial character of the Jewish community. But could any of the innumerable great teachers that Judaism produced between Moses and the Gaon be called upon to pass judgment on that racial conception of Judaism, which detaches Israel from its God and its Torah, they would probably fail to grasp its meaning, and, if they did, they would beyond the shadow of a doubt be no less horrified, and probably much more horrified, by this view than by the doctrine which denies the racial character of the Jews.

Thus viewing our problem in the light of Jewish history, we must unhesitatingly admit that, whatever our present position may be, in the past—in the course of 3800 years out of the 3900 years of the existence of our people—race and religion in Judaism were inseparable. To put it in the formula borrowed from our mystic literature, "The Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are one," or, to quote the words of a modern Jewish scholar, "if we could imagine for a moment Israel giving up its allegiance to God, its Torah and its divine institutions, the Rabbis would be the first to sign its death warrant as a nation."[1] A *religious race, i. e.*, a race, or a nation, whose distinguishing feature and whose reason for existence is religious, is the only correct definition of the character of the Jewish community as it presents itself to us from the very beginning of its existence down to modern times.[2]

[1] Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 105 *et seq.*

[2] In this respect the Jews differed from all other nations of antiquity, in which race and religion were similarly interwined. For whereas in the case of the other nations the religious interests

In modern times when so many fundamental conceptions affecting Jewish life and thought were completely revolutionized a radical departure took place also in regard to our problem. Now for the first time was the attempt made to separate these two elements, which for well-nigh four thousand years had been inseparable, and to evolve two diametrically opposite conceptions of Judaism: the one which acknowledges only the religious, and the other which recognizes solely the racial character of our community. This separation was the outcome of a two-fold process. On the one hand, the recrudescence of nationalism in the non-Jewish world made it appear dangerous for the Jews to admit that they were racially, or nationally, different from the people in whose midst they lived. On the other hand, the weakening of religious conviction and sentiment brought forth a type of Jew who had lost his religious affiliations, while the racial sentiment, which had gained ground among Jews in the same proportion as it did among non-Jews, was still working in him with undiminished, if not with intensified force. As a result, Reform Judaism arose which endeavored to strip Judaism of all its national elements and to preserve it merely as a religious denomination. In opposition to it, a theory of Judaism came into being which views Judaism merely as the expression of the Jewish race and ignores the whole religious stratification which has been going on in our history from the very beginning.

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had to subordinate themselves to those of the race, in Israel the interests of the race were made subservient—at least this was the demand of the prophets—to those of religion.

But we need only subject these conceptions to a slight analysis to discover that they are both artificial. For the advocates of neither conception—except for a few irresponsible radicals in both camps—have the courage or the consistency to drive it to its logical consequences. Reform Judaism is still encumbered with numerous racial elements which it dare not remove. It still clings to a few shreds of Hebrew, although religion and language have nothing in common. It discountenances intermarriage. It keeps "the sign of the covenant," which can only be justified as the symbol of a community cemented by blood. It embraces within its fold Jews who, from a religious point of view, cannot be regarded as such. Racial Judaism again is forced to accept the whole Jewish past, to adopt many Jewish traditions and associations as well as the products of the Jewish genius which up till recently were pre-eminently religious. The more thoughtful among the adherents of this latter conception of Judaism, apprehending the emptiness and resistlessness of a purely racial Judaism, openly advocate the acceptance of religious Judaism in its historic completeness as a means to an end. Both conceptions labor to undo the results of an historic process of thousands of years. Whether these endeavors to disrupt the racial and religious elements hitherto bound up with one another will ever succeed no mortal can tell. But judging by historic analogy, we may safely assume that it will take many generations before this disruption is accomplished, and we may well question whether Judaism will survive this disruption.

What, then, should be *our* attitude—I mean the attitude of those who, drawing from the fountain of our history, acknowledge the two-fold character of our community as a religious race—towards these two opposing tendencies in Jewish life? In my opinion, our attitude should be determined by the fact that these tendencies, being the outcome of forces whose field of operation is outside the Jewish sphere, are entirely beyond our control. For it is neither in our power to remove Israel from the midst of the nations—even were we to succeed in establishing a Jewish centre in Palestine. Nor can we put a stop to that relaxation of religious sentiment and conviction which is by no means confined to the Jewish community. As in our whole life in the Golus, here, too, we are governed by conditions for which we are not responsible and which *nolens volens* we must accept and turn to the best advantage. Our attitude should, therefore, be one of moderation. We can work in harmony with the adherents of both religious and racial Judaism as long as they are *not* consistent. After all, the actions of men are not determined by formulas and logical abstractions, but by natural and historic forces which, having slowly ripened out of centuries of development, cannot be easily discarded. There are many Jews who deny the racial or national character of Judaism and yet betray in their actions and sentiments a deep attachment to the Jewish people as a racial community. There are others who deny the religious basis of Judaism and yet in their whole spiritual make-up bear the deep impress of the Jewish religion. All these sections,

while differing in theory, may yet work harmoniously together and contribute their share towards the preservation and development of Judaism. Those, however, who push their abstractions to the extreme, be they the representatives of the religious theory who make a parody of Judaism by turning it into a sect, or be they the fanatics of the racial conception who would put up a national literature without the Bible and a national Jewish life without Jewish traditions, are equally dangerous to historical Judaism, which alone is entitled to be called Judaism, and which alone deserves to be preserved and to be fought for. These extreme factions, equally removed from the highway of Jewish development, can never obtain a permanent hold on the Jewish people. "Thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee."

I have purposely refrained from referring to Zionism in the above expositions, because the problem under discussion does not affect Zionism as such, but merely as a phase of national Judaism in general. What has been said about the radical exponents of racial Judaism applies with equal force to similar tendencies in Zionism. But while as a movement Zionism has no particular relation to this problem, Zionism as a reality, as the consummation of the age-long Jewish yearnings after a home in Palestine, will no doubt affect our problem fundamentally, as it will all other problems of Jewish life. What, then, we may ask, will be the relation between race and religion in a Jewish commonwealth, such as Zionism hopes and works for? It is clear that, the object of our inquiry lying in the future, the answer cannot

be a matter of argument, but of personal conviction. The following, therefore, even more so than the foregoing, cannot claim to be more than the expression of subjective opinion.

When we look down the long vista of our history and try to define the essential characteristic of our people, then the trait which stands out as the distinguishing mark of the Jewish nation and which has remained unchanged amidst all vicissitudes is undoubtedly its religious sense, the capacity of penetrating beyond the world of visible phenomena into the domain of the invisible, of grasping, behind the sphere of material, tangible existence, the reality of the spiritual and moral,—that sense of the Jews, which shows itself in their conception of God, their system of ethics, their manner of living, their antipathy to form and figure, their lack of monuments. The whole complexion of the Jewish people has altered in the course of its history; it has been turned from a race of peasants, to whom commerce was an abomination, into a people of traders, who must be drawn to agriculture by force. Nearly every one of its characteristics has been lost, or has undergone a radical change. But the religious sense has up till recently remained part and parcel of our national make-up. If, in consequence, we find that in our present generation, especially in that section, in which foreign culture suddenly clashed with the elements of Judaism, the Jews, "the body-guard of Monotheism," are to be found in appalling numbers among the exponents of irreligion, we are not justified in looking upon it as the manifestation of an inner Jewish sentiment, but as a

fleeting tendency thrown into our life by currents from without, and as another instance of the disintegrating effect produced upon our national characteristics by the influences of the outside world. We have, therefore, every reason to assume that the establishment of a Jewish centre on the historic soil of Judaism, in which the Jewish people will create for itself normal conditions of existence and the Jewish spirit will develop free and unhampered, will enable the Jews to recover their innate characteristics temporarily obscured by conflicting influences,—first among them their religious sense. Then will the Jews, a free people on a free soil, once more become, as they were of old, a *religious race*, a community cemented and segregated by racial characteristics, and serving by their religious enthusiasm as a "light to the Gentiles."

XXIV

ZIONISM AND RELIGIOUS JUDAISM*

AMONG the many romantic events accompanying the tortuous course of the world war none perhaps is more romantic than the recent declaration of the British Government offering its co-operation to the Zionists in the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people upon its ancient soil in Palestine. Bridging the chasm of twenty-five centuries, it connects directly with the famous edict of Cyrus, who, on entering Babylon in 538 B. C., "made a declaration throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 'Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah!' " (Ezra i, 1-3). Already then the romanticism of a nation rising from its grave was fully appreciated both by Jews and non-Jews. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream," and "then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them" (Ps. cxxvi, 1-2). And today, with our knowledge of the unique record of Jewish martyrdom and dispersion for the last two thousand years, the sight of a nation, rising from political death, to receive the reward for its unparalleled loyalty, must fill the

* Published in the *New York Evening Post*, December 12, 1917. Reprinted in pamphlet form by the Zionist Organization of America.

heart of Jew and Gentile alike with sentiments of awe and silent wonderment.

The possibilities of a Jewish re-settlement of Palestine, the land which forms a connecting link between three continents and three religions, are incalculable, whether looked at from the political, economic or religious point of view. To those Jews who are deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and believe that Judaism has a religious message to the world—and to those Christians who share or appreciate these sentiments—the latter aspect will appear of paramount consideration.

The religion of Judaism is indissolubly bound up with the homeland of the Jewish people in Palestine. This inseparable connection is the fundamental premise not only of biblical Judaism, which views the entire history of the Jewish race in the light of a Divine pledge given to its ancestor Abraham, but also of the entire post-biblical tradition of Judaism. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, when, catering to the desire for civil and political emancipation, some modern Jewish rabbis began to preach the dispersion as the final aspiration of the Jewish people, not a single Jew ever doubted that the restoration of Israel to its ancient soil was an indispensable condition for the realization of the religious mission of Judaism.

To some this inseparable connection of the Jewish religion with "a little corner in Western Asia" may appear narrow, but it only does so because the motive underlying this view is entirely misunderstood. Judaism, as formulated and preached by its greatest

religious geniuses, is not merely a religion in the accepted sense of the word, a body of abstract ideas about the Invisible, but rather the embodiment of these abstract ideas, or ideals, in concrete human institutions, in a nation, a commonwealth, a state. The fundamental ideal of Jewish prophecy, Justice and Righteousness, presupposes a definite social order, such as can only be realized in a body politic.

But while in its form religious Judaism is thus circumscribed within national and territorial limits, its motives and ultimate aspirations are essentially universal. Israel's devout consummation is to be a servant of humanity, and Zion is conceived as the place whence in an ideal future the "Word of the Lord" will proceed to the rest of the world. At no time in Jewish history, even when the black clouds of hatred and persecution seemed to swallow this bright star of a general human hope, was the Jew oblivious of this universal aspect of his religion.

But in serving humanity Israel did not wish to become the salt of the earth, which, after being dissolved in the whirlpool of nations, was bound to lose its saltness. It rather hoped to become "a light to the Gentiles:" to be useful to the world by retaining and developing its separate individuality. The great prophet of the Babylonian Captivity who is the most eloquent spokesman of Israel's religious mission to the world is at the same time the most fervent advocate of Jewish national restoration. He hails Cyrus, the heathen king of Persia, as "the anointed one of the Lord" and calls with clarion tones upon his fellow-Jews in Babylon "to go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah."

Now not even the most enthusiastic adherent of religious Judaism, unless he be deliberately blind to the plainest facts of reality and experience, can have the courage to maintain that modern Israel, as a body, has been the carrier of a specific religious message to the world. The accomplishments of individual modern Jews as part and parcel of their respective nations have undoubtedly been very great, in fact, much greater than the world realizes—largely for the reason that many of these Jews have discarded the label of Judaism, resembling the tribe of the Azra "who die when they love." But whatever their accomplishments, they certainly are not to be found in the sphere of religion. Modern Jewry has distinguished itself in commerce, in industry, in art, in literature, in politics, nay, recently in athletics—in everything, except in the domain of religion which is the sum and substance of Jewish existence.

To be sure, during their confinement in the Ghetto the Jews have developed an extraordinarily rich and intense religious life, but that life has been without effect upon the outside world, and has scarcely excited its notice. As for emancipated Jewry which has left the Ghetto, its religious development is at a standstill. Its religious practice has almost been crushed beneath the pressure of economic and social ambitions, and its religious thought, as far as it is not a mere after-glow of the religious intensity of the Ghetto, is an adaptation, and not always a successful adaptation, of the religious ideas of the environment.

Thus the Jew who believes in the religious message of Judaism and harks back to the traditions of the ages,

who shudders at the prospect of the "People of the Book" making way for the "People of the Ledger," cannot but look forward to the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine as the only hope of reviving and realizing the religious aspirations of the Jewish people. Assembled on its hallowed soil, where every footstep re-echoes the religious message of its ancient leaders, neither shut out from the rest of the world by the cramping walls of the Ghetto, nor yet crushed or crippled by the tremendous impact of non-Jewish influences, Israel may work out its own destiny and may become again a potent factor in the religious life of humanity.

This hope is in no way dimmed by the fact that, for a variety of reasons which cannot be considered here, Zionism has also a strong appeal to many Jews who, under the influence of their environment, have been detached from the religious moorings of Judaism. Whatever be the motive of their allegiance to the movement, the effect of their strivings can be nothing but of benefit to the future of the Jewish religion. For every endeavor towards a Jewish center in Palestine is helping to create normal conditions of development for the religious genius of Judaism.

Zionism, in a spirit of perfect toleration, makes room on its platform for Jews of every shade of religious opinion and practice, and it does so consistently, because it unites them all in one common goal: the establishment of a political, economic and social substructure for the untrammeled unfoldment of Jewish spiritual life, even though the nature and direction of that life may be differently conceived by the dif-

ferent sections of Jewry. Those who believe in the historic continuity of the Jewish people and look upon religion as a genuine manifestation of its national genius are firmly of the conviction that, in its proper setting, the religious ideal of Judaism is bound to triumph over the conflicting tendencies which at present may seem to obscure it. Rejuvenated Zion, by gathering the scattered energies of Israel, will prove again a great spiritual focus which will send out its vivifying rays to the stiffening limbs of the Jewish national organism throughout the Diaspora, and will make Judaism shine forth once more as the luminous bearer of a religious message to humanity.

XXV

THE INTERNATIONAL ZIONIST CONGRESS*

TWO powerful tendencies which at first sight seem to contradict but in reality supplement one another characterize the modern age of humanity: Internationalism and Nationalism. The enormously improved means of communication which gradually tend to annihilate distance have brought the nations nearer to one another, and, weaving around them the common bond of humanity, have called forth international movements which find their visible and often picturesque expression in international gatherings, or congresses. At the same time we observe, as a result of certain scientific and philosophic doctrines, a tremendous rise of the wave of nationalism, a keen realization of the powers and possibilities that lie hidden in every separate national type and a passionate desire, which forms the motive power of innumerable movements, to safequard it against its enemies and to unfold and uplift it for the benefit of humanity. Instead of the flabby, sentimental, academic cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century, there gradually rises into being and power the strongly marked, well organized, and energetic universalism of our own age, which is truly international, because it wishes

* Written in June, 1913, on the occasion of the forthcoming Eleventh Zionist Congress at Vienna. It is published here for the first time.

to serve humanity through the natural and hence indispensable medium of the separate nationality.

There are few, if any, movements which present so remarkable a combination of these two great tendencies, which at one and the same time are so emphatically national and international, as the Zionist movement, and its mouthpiece, the Zionist Congress. From this point of view alone, not to speak of the theological, historical, and economic issues involved in this movement, Zionism claims and deserves the attention of every one who is fond of watching the absorbingly interesting, though pathetically painful, process of the transformation of ideas into realities.

Zionism, indeed, is a modern name for an ancient idea, or, to be more precise, a modern ending for an ancient name. For Zion, the poetical designation of the capital of Judaea, was a word to conjure with as early as in the days of the prophets. The prophets of Israel, who, like the Jewish people in general, combined a passionate longing for the ideal with a keen understanding of the real—hence the contradictory charges of unproductive idealism, on the one hand, and of sordid realism, on the other, which are simultaneously preferred against the Jews—taught their nation to despise material force and political power, such as characterized the great empires of antiquity which hovered greedily over little Judaea. But at the same time they preached that the abstract moral ideals, which they regarded as Israel's life-work and reason for existence, could never be transformed into living realities, except through the human agency of a commonwealth, or a state. To them Zion was,

therefore, that ideal commonwealth which was a *conditio sine qua non* for the normal existence of the Jewish people. The Jewish state was not to be an end in itself, but merely the material means for a spiritual end, the political framework for the great moral truths which were to be embodied in definite human institutions. While forming the root and the fruit of the Jewish national genius, the Jewish commonwealth was yet to serve humanity as a whole. Zion was to be the "City of Righteousness," "the Faithful Town," whence the Law and the Word of the Lord was to proceed to the whole world.

The spiritual loftiness and at the same time the practical reasonableness of this prophetic ideal received its crucial and triumphant test when Nebuchadnezzar put an end to the Jewish commonwealth, and all political illusions of the Jewish people burst like a soap bubble. The Jews were quick to learn their lesson. The second Jewish commonwealth, founded by Zerubbabel and firmly established by Ezra and Nehemiah, was an exact application to reality of this great prophetic doctrine, and in this form, as a modest material framework for the rich spiritual life of the nation, Zion proved the City of Righteousness whence the Word of the Lord actually proceeded to a great part of humanity. The Jews, while indifferent and even hostile to the military exploits of the later de-Judaized Hasmonaeans, shirked no sacrifice when the existence of the Commonwealth was at stake. In the deadly struggle with overpowering Rome, the Jews, though not a military people, fought as no other nation of antiquity had

ever fought. No Roman triumph perhaps was more dearly bought and more deeply appreciated than Titus' victory over insignificant little Judaea, and in the struggle with Hadrian, when the Jews made a final dash for liberty, more than half a million Jewish lives were cheerfully sacrificed in the attempt to regain their independence. And when the Jews had to yield to brutal force, they parted from their commonwealth with the fierce declaration of the Psalmist: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember thee not; if I set not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy!" While driven from their land physically, they made it to an extent scarcely paralleled in history their inalienable spiritual possession, and they wove inextricably the hope of the Return into the texture of their national consciousness.

The Zionist ideal, which from the very beginning was essentially spiritual or religious in character, became, now that the Jews were deprived of all political and territorial agencies and concentrated their whole energy on their religious life, more and more metaphysical, and was gradually detached from reality. The return to Zion was still firmly hoped for and fervently prayed for, but its realization was trustfully left to Divine Providence. Yet the latent energy involved in this Zionist sentiment was undiminished, and only a spark was needed to kindle it into a blazing flame. Jewish history records a considerable number of so-called Messianic uprisings, in which the Jews attempted, by means which did not correspond to reality and were in consequence unsuccessful, to regain their ancient

home. Nearer our own age, in the eighties of the past century, when, under the influence of de-Judaizing tendencies, the Zionist ideal threatened to lose, and partly did lose, its hold over a small, though important section of the Jewish people, the terrible Russian persecutions provided the necessary motive power and called forth less fantastic and more effective attempts which resulted in the establishment of numerous Jewish colonies in Palestine. But the tranformation of the dim, and, in spite of all counteracting influences, still deeply implanted religious yearnings into a firmly organized, world-wide movement, is an achievement of our own generation, and is connected with the name of one who, in a short-lived career of nine years, has succeeded to leave the indelible stamp of his personality upon scattered and divided Jewry. We refer to Doctor Theodore Herzl.

Doctor Herzl was a successful German author and playwright who, well provided with worldly goods, looked forward to a happy career of fame and prosperity. He was one of those modern de-Judaized Jews who neither shared nor even knew the miseries and the hopes of the Jewish people, who neither cared for a Jewish commonwealth nor for the spiritual truths which that commonwealth was to embody. The wave of anti-Jewish hatred which surged around him, while, as a representative of the famous Viennese paper *Die Neue Freie Presse*, he was a witness of the Dreyfus scandal in France, shattered his tranquility. In a fit of strange inspiration, feeling, so he tells us, as if a mighty eagle were flapping its wings over his head, he wrote in 1895 his pamphlet

"The Jewish State," in which he proposed the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth as a remedy for the ills of the Jewish people. The publication of this pamphlet brought for the first time to his notice not only the enormous latent energy which lay in the traditional Zionist sentiment still shared by the bulk of the Jews, but also the actual attempts made here and there to convert this sentiment into practical achievements. He now became the centre for all these widely scattered tendencies and strivings which, with a statesman-like genius, such as the Jews have not produced for their own benefit since the days of Jonathan the Hasmonaean, he was able to whip into shape and to transform into a mighty, world-wide organization.

When Herzl began his activity on behalf of the Jews, Zionism was little more than a theory, advocated and amateurishly handled by some, ridiculed and bitterly hated by many, ignored by most. When, nine years later, in 1904, he died at the age of 44, a martyr to his cause, for which he had sacrificed his health and his wealth, he left a movement behind him which was as wide as the Jewish Diaspora, and counted its adherents by the hundreds of thousands, if not by the millions; possessing, through his personal intervention, the sympathy or, at least, the interest of mighty rulers and governments, not excluding the Sultan and the Pope, with a Jewish National Fund, which, made up of the penny contributions of the Jewish people—as a people the poorest on earth—now amounts to over five million francs, with a Jewish Colonial Trust which, though shunned by all

the great Jewish banking firms, can boast of more than 150,000 shareholders (a share being $5), and with numerous other agencies and institutions, such as are needed by a large movement. He left, above all, an ideal, which, having been enclosed by him in the protective shell of an organization, became once more a living and ennobling force in the life of the Jews.

One of the first measures which Herzl took to bring Zionism into shape was to issue a call for a Zionist Congress. The non-Jewish world to which the Jew is the same ghost-like puzzle today as he was to the dark Middle Ages considers Jewish solidarity as one of the fundamental characteristics of Jewish life. This was to some extent true in times gone-by, although, curiously enough, the Jews themselves have always complained of the lack of solidarity as an essential and frequently fatal feature of their national existence. In modern times, however, this non-Jewish estimate of the Jewish people is nothing less than cruel irony. For there is no people which is as scattered and divided, geographically, mentally, culturally, temperamentally, socially, as are the Jews of to-day. The Jews of the various countries speak different languages, think different thoughts, feel different feelings, have different social, cultural, and financial standards, and in many cases the only solidarity which binds them to one another is the solidarity of their enemies. No wonder, therefore, that the proposal of an all-Jewish Zionist Congress was received with a loud and almost unanimous choir of passionate disapproval or lofty ridicule. How, indeed, could the Jews of the various countries

be expected to meet and to understand one another and still less to agree and to cooperate with one another?

To this belief in the utter impossibility of an international Jewish gathering came another even more serious apprehension. The Zionist Congress, while primarily designed to arouse the Jews to the necessity of Zionism, was, so its organizer declared, to unfold the Jewish problem and what it considered to be the only effective remedy frankly and unreservedly before the non-Jewish world, and to solicit its sympathy and moral support. But many modern Jews who, under their fashionable frock coat, still retained the fearsomeness and pettiness of the Ghetto Jew, were mortally afraid of baring the Jewish ills before a hostile world, and anticipated untold calamities from such a course. When the Jews of Munich had learned that the Congress was to be held in that city, they adopted such a bitterly hostile attitude that it was thought wise to transfer the Congress to Basle.

In this city, on the soil of hospitable and liberty-loving Switzerland, the First Zionist Congress met in August, 1897. Two hundred and four delegates from different countries heeded the call of Doctor Herzl, among them seventy from Russia, who came with the Damocles sword of a tyrannical and revengeful government, which hated Zionism doubly as a movement of Jews and as a movement of liberty, hanging over their heads. It was a solemn and historic moment when the representatives of scattered Israel now, for the first time since it was driven from its home by mighty Rome, met on

common ground to exchange brotherly greetings and to voice their common fears and hopes. The keynote of the Congress, which was formally opened by Doctor Herzl, was struck by Max Nordau in a memorable address in which this famous writer and thinker, with the courage and frankness that behooves free men, and without a shadow of that evasive and apologetic attitude which had formerly been displayed in the treatment of the Jewish problem, proclaimed to the world the revived hope of the Jew. The proceedings culminated in the resolution which at once became and has since remained the cornerstone of the movement: "Zionism aims at establishing a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine for the Jewish people."

The first Zionist Congress was the initiation of Zionism, and, in particular, of the new Congress institution within Zionism. Since then the Zionist Congresses have steadily grown in size and in influence. The number of delegates has gradually risen to 600, although the size of the constituency for one delegate was raised from 100 to 200. The constantly growing sympathy with the movement manifests itself in a constantly growing number of visitors. who come from the four corners of the earth. The enormous importance of the Zionist Congress, apart from its being the agency of the Zionist movement, lies in the fact that it is the only tribune from which the Jewish people as a people can make its voice heard. The Congress has met ten times, seven times in Basle, which is favored by its central location, once in London, the Hague, and Hamburg. It is now to

meet for the eleventh time in Vienna, the city in which Herzl lived and died.

I have called the Zionist Congress international. In a way it is a misnomer. For it is the mouthpiece of an essentially national movement, and its membership is made up of Jews. Yet it exhibits all the dazzling variety and all the kaleidoscopic picturesqueness of an international gathering. It is a miniature reproduction of the whole Jewish Diaspora, not only in its geographical, but also in its cultural and social divisions. Side by side with the representatives from Russia, Galicia, or Roumania sit the delegates from Germany, France, or England. The Zionist from Scandinavia or Holland exchanges greetings with his colleague from Italy or Bulgaria. The representatives from Canada and the United States rub shoulders with the envoys from South Africa and Australia. The delegate from far-off New Zealand is seen hobnobbing with his fellow Zionist from Siberia, who travelled eighteen days in an express train to carry the message of his distant constituency to the Congress. The picturesque representative from Tunis can be seen near the still more picturesque messengers of the mountain Jews in the Caucasus, whose powerful figures, bristling with arms, offer so strange a contrast to the present day over-civilized type of European Jew.

As for the cultural or social differences, the Congress offers a veritable study in human types and characters. The old-fashioned, orthodox Rabbi with the traditional cap and ear locks, the free-thinking intellectual, the pious *Hassid*, the unconventional

radical, writers, journalists, artists, physicians, lawyers, the grave merchant, the stooping scholar, the sturdy workingman, here and there the prosperous banker, all form one whole, animated by one desire, though divided in all else.

Judged from the linguistic point of view, the Zionist Congress is a veritable Tower of Babel, with the vital distinction that the participants somehow manage to understand one another. Nearly all European and some Asiatic languages are represented, though those mostly heard from the tribune are German, Russian, English, and Yiddish. But, as Zionism progresses, the ancient national tongue of the Jews, which Zionist enthusiasm has resuscitated to new life in Palestine, becomes more and more the favorite vehicle of expression, and the language of the prophets can often be heard to convey the complicated subtleties of modern parliamentary procedure. The Hebrew language is preferred on emotional grounds by all, and is understood by a vast number, if not the majority, of delegates.

As time goes on, the Zionist Congress is becoming more and more the focus of international Jewish life. The number of delegates has now almost trebled, and the constantly growing stream of visitors from all parts of the world, among whom there are many non-Jewish sympathizers, supply a picturesque setting for what might well be called the Jewish Parliament. Apart from their principal political object, the Congresses now serve as a centre for many Jewish cultural endeavors, such as the exhibition of Jewish objects of art, Jewish music, Jewish literature, and the

like. No one who has ever been present at a Zionist Congress can have failed to observe these signs of a new quickening life and consciousness that pulsates through the Jewish organism.

It was pointed out above that the Zionist Congress was conceived and created by Doctor Herzl. But what is far more to his credit, it was Doctor Herzl who brought the Congress to its present maturity and gave it the permanence which is now everywhere conceded to it. The difficulties were tremendous. The apprehension of the opponents of Zionism, who believed, many of them sincerely, that an assembly composed of so many variegated and often contradictory elements could only result in a public scandal, was not without foundation, particularly when we remember that for more than eighteen centuries the Jews as a whole had ceased to conduct their national affairs through the agency of a parliamentary institution, and that the large number of delegates who came from Russia were complete strangers to any form of parliamentary procedure. Yet all these difficulties disappeared before the magic wand of Herzl, whose name is inseparably connected with this, his particular creation.

Those who visited the earlier Congresses will remember some moments when it seemed that the differences of opinion expressed with characteristic Jewish fervor would inevitably lead to an open rupture, when over the surging, tumultuous crowd of delegates there rose tower-like the tall figure of Herzl, with flashing eyes and raised hands, and when, as by magic, the tumult was hushed to silence and the

panting multitude listened with abated breath to the gentle voice of its beloved leader, warning, admonishing, and calling to unity and harmony. It was only on one occasion, an occasion of which the Zionists and perhaps the Jews in general might well be proud, when even Herzl's influence seemed powerless. At the Sixth Congress, held in Basle in August, 1903, which, by the way, was attended by 592 delegates and more than 2000 spectators, Herzl laid before the Congress the proposal of the British Government offering the Jews, through the medium of the Zionist organization, the establishment of an autonomous Jewish settlement in its East African Protectorate. Opinions are divided as to Herzl's true motives in placing this proposal, which lay outside the official Zionist programme, before the Congress. Some hold that, under the fresh impression of the terrible massacres in Russia, Herzl realized the necessity of an immediate place of refuge for his persecuted brethren, while others maintain that it was a diplomatic move to make the Sultan more responsive to the official aims of Zionism. Be that as it may, at the Congress both Herzl and Nordau gave their solemn assurance that the new proposal was not meant in any way to displace the Zionist idea, that East Africa was merely to be a temporary shelter, pending the establishment of a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine. Moreover, the resolution which they laid before the Congress did not demand the immediate approval of the British offer, but merely the sending of a commission of investigation.

After several days of passionate argument, and not

without considerable persuasion on the part of the leaders, the resolution obtained a majority vote, with the significant proviso that the expenses of the projected commission were not to be borne out of the regular Zionist funds. Yet the Russian delegates, who hung with boundless affection and admiration on Herzl, stood firm. Those who can think of the Jew only as a hard-headed trafficker, who is always anxious to drive a bargain, and is deaf to the imponderable things of life, would probably think otherwise had they witnessed the heart-rending signs of grief, the scalding tears, the drooping forms, the passionate protests of these Jews, many of whom had but recently passed through the horrors of Kishineff and Odessa, but to whom the mere thought of polluting the purity of the Zionist ideal by the sordid considerations of the moment seemed an unpardonable sacrilege. Their love of Palestine was even greater than their love of Herzl, and they were ready to abandon the leader they idolized should he, though actuated by the purest motives, prove unfaithful to the flag of Zion.

Herzl was not destined to see the next Congress, at which the British offer was ultimately declined. He died in July, 1904, broken-hearted, as many say, by the lack of confidence which manifested itself among his Russian adherents at a critical moment. Whatever resentment may have existed against his East-African policy was swept away by his tragic death, and the love of Herzl, which in our prosaic age has in a few years created the legendary figure of a national hero, is growing in intensity as the years

go by. To be sure, Herzl's personal charm is no more there to blend into harmony the disharmonious elements of scattered Jewry, but his memory exerts an influence almost as powerful as that of his bodily presence. What Herzl had once, with characteristic modesty, expressed as his wish, became sad reality. The Seventh Congress, which met for the first time without its leader, passed a resolution of condolence and proceeded to its work. Herzl had achieved the greatest triumph of a leader: he had succeeded in detaching his cause from his person.

The Zionist movement and its mouthpiece, the Zionist Congress, represents, like the Jewish people itself, an unusual combination of manifold elements. It grapples with an essentially national problem by means of international agencies. It blends antiquity with modernity and passionate idealism with cautious realism. The progress Zionism has made in the comparatively short period of its existence is remarkable, far greater than its enemies or even its friends had anticipated. More than by concrete gains, more even than by its actual achievements in Palestine, where a new Jewish settlement with new cultural values is gradually unfolding itself, can the progress of Zionism be gauged by the mental revolution which has transformed the modern "Hebrew," mostly ignorant and often ashamed of the traditions of his race, constantly apologizing and frequently cringing, into the new type of Jew who frankly and proudly confesses his Judaism; who, having nothing to hide, looks men and facts squarely in the face; who, being neither blind to the faults nor to the virtues of his

people, endeavors to eliminate the former and to cultivate the latter; who, equally realizing his duties within and without Judaism, is anxious to be of service to his nation that his nation may in turn be of service to the world.

To be sure, there are Jews, many of them big-hearted and noble-minded, and sincerely interested in the welfare of their people, who are indifferent and even hostile to Zionism, largely because they regard it as a menace to the position of the Jews among the nations. But these Jews, and the non-Jews who may think likewise, thoroughly misapprehend the fundamental tendency of the Zionist movement. The Jews are too deeply rooted in the lands of their birth or abode—and often rooted far more emotionally than commercially, not excluding the lands of persecution —ever to allow Zionism to clash with the citizenship of the Jew in various countries. Already the prophet Jeremiah, who was a passionate lover of Zion, exhorted the Jewish settlers in Babylon "to seek the welfare of the city whither they had been exiled," and throughout its history the Jewish people has faithfully followed the precept of the prophet of Anatoth. Nor can Palestine physically become the gathering place of the Jews of the Diaspora, even if the miracle of such a gigantic transplantation could ever be conceived and conceded. In spite of the terrible material sufferings to which the vast majority of the Jewish people is still subjected, Zionism, like the great prophetic doctrine imbedded in the word Zion, is primarily a spiritual ideal. It wishes to check and to turn the process of disintegration which has

set in in the lands of the Diaspora, and which, by robbing the Jews of all their distinctive characteristics, often robs them of their traditional virtues and turns a people with an ancient and glorious culture into a colorless, and hence valueless, unit in the assembly of nations. Zionism, like the Zionist ideal of the prophets, does not lay its accent on material power. The Zionist Jew burns with shame and indignation when he realizes that his people, whose whole existence, with its unparalleled suffering and self-sacrifice, has been one long, passionate protest against material power, should be branded in the eyes of the world as a champion of materialism. The only power after which Zionism strives is the power for righteousness, that righteousness which was first preached by the prophets of Israel, and which, as they also taught, is only of value when embodied in human institutions. Zionism aims at establishing a Jewish centre in Palestine, where, under the flag of a sympathetic government, his national culture, harking back to its old historic associations, may once more be given a chance to show what it can contribute to the spiritual wealth of the world.

This role of Palestine as a spiritual centre, vague and abstract though it may seem, is yet no academic theory, but was a palpable reality as far back as two thousand years ago. In the centuries preceding the rise of Christianity and a century after it, Palestine harbored but a fraction of the Jewish people. The centre in Palestine yielded in numbers and in material significance to other Jewish settlements, particularly to the Jewish community in Egypt, which was in-

dissolubly bound up with the Ptolemaic Empire and served it faithfully in the highest civil and military functions. Yet Palestine was the spiritual centre of Judaism in which the great Jewish values that afterwards entered into the mental woof of mankind were formulated and elaborated. And while the Zionists are straining their efforts to create the material basis for a Jewish centre in Palestine, they fervently hope that it may prove, as did its predecessors more than two thousand years ago, to serve as a rallying point for the scattered endeavors of the Jewish genius, by turning its vast potential energy into actual achievement, and once more to make the Jewish people, as a people, a valuable member of the human family.

XXVI

PALESTINE AND THE DIASPORA*

THE Jewish Community of New York City is striving to become the Kehillah, the gathering point, of the Jews of this great metropolis. It does not wish to represent merely one party in Judaism; it wishes to include all Jews who believe in a Jewish future, though they may vastly differ as to the form which this future should take. For this reason, being called upon to discuss, on the floor of the Convention "The Significance of Palestine for the Jewries of the World," I shall not try to express a partisan view, but shall endeavor to give utterance to those sentiments which have permeated the Jewish people throughout the ages and still permeate the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people in our own days.

At a time like this, when the stuff that dreams are made of is turning over night into solid fact, when even the drowsy East is waking from its age-long stupor, and when that little corner in Western Asia which civilized humanity calls the Holy Land is attracting the attention of the whole world, it would be an unpardonable omission if we, the delegates of

* Address delivered at the Eighth Annual Convention of the Jewish Community (Kehillah) of New York City, April 28, 1917, in connection with a resolution in favor of a Jewish home in Palestine, passed on the same occasion. Published in the *American Hebrew* May 4, 1917, under the title "The Significance of Palestine for the Jewries of the World."

the largest Jewish community of the earth, representing fully one-tenth of the entire Jewish population on the surface of the globe, would fail to give public expression to our love and our solicitude for that land which even today is known among us as *Eretz Yisroel*, "the Land of Israel."

There are perhaps people in our midst who think that at this juncture, when our country claims the love and self-sacrifice of all its citizens, the time may not be opportune to proclaim our love for Palestine. Such people have a poor estimate of the human heart. They seem to think that the soul of man is like a cheap grinding organ, which can turn out but one single tune. The Jews all over the world love the land in which they live. They fight shoulder to shoulder with the nations of which they form a part. They suffer with them, they bleed with them, they die with them. The Jewries of the world each love their own country, even as a man loves his wife. But *all* the Jewries of the world love, in addition, *Eretz Yisroel*, "the Land of Israel,"—even as a man loves his mother. Thus, indeed, spoke one of our prophets: "Even as a man is comforted by his mother, so will I comfort you, and in Jerusalem shall ye be comforted." A son who is ashamed of his love for his mother makes, indeed, a poor husband.

We Jews of America, the land of the free and the brave, which stretched forth her arms to us, the sons of a wandering tribe, are devoted to this country with our heart and soul, and we pledge to her our love, our loyalty, our life. But we believe that our love for America is purer, our devotion to her is

deeper, because at the same time we may love and may be devoted to Palestine, to which as Jews we owe our birth and the best that is in us.

Our love of Zion is one of our proudest titles. For no nation has ever loved its country with such a surpassing love as the people of Israel has loved the land of Israel. Though driven from Palestine nearly two thousand years ago, the Jewish people, which the world, knowing it only on the surface, considers a nation of hard-headed, sober-minded traders, has loved its ancient land with an undying love, with a romantic love, with a love one reads of in books of fiction, a love that expects no reward, a love that is happy in the privilege of loving.

And yet, though expecting no reward, Israel received the amplest reward for its love. For it is this love which has enabled the Jewish people to survive until this day. The love of *Eretz Yisroel* was the torch that illumined the thorny path of our people. It was the anchor that kept our ship from drifting out into the boundless ocean. And whenever the eternal wanderer seemed to sink under the burden of his suffering, he looked up into the sky and saw the light that shone from Zion, and with renewed courage he continued on his journey.

This significance of Palestine for the Jewries of the world is just as great today as it was ever before. Those who believe that the emancipation of the Jews will solve the Jewish problem, and that the Messianic ideal will be consummated by the removal of Jewish disabilities, short-sightedly overlook that the Jewish problem has two aspects: it has a material aspect,

being the problem of Jewry, and it has a spiritual aspect, being the problem of Judaism.

The material problem, the problem of discrimination, suffering, and persecution, must and will be solved by Jewish emancipation. But the spiritual problem, the problem of our higher destiny, will not, and cannot, be solved by Jewish emancipation. The solution of our material problem depends on the nations around us; the solution of our spiritual problem depends on our own endeavors.

Now the spiritual problem of Jewry may perhaps be briefly formulated in these words: to make Judaism —not individual Jews, but our common Judaism— once more a creative force in the life of humanity. It is the same problem which our forefathers for centuries called *Galuth ha-Shekina*, "The Exile of the Divine Presence," and which is still expressed in the words of our ancient liturgy, recited by the Jews three times a day: *We-thehezenu einenu be-shuvkho le-Zion be-rahamim*, "Let our eyes behold Thy return in mercy to Zion." In the Dispersion we can and must aim at the preservation of Judaism, at the adaptation of Judaism, but we scarcely dare hope for a creative Judaism.

This is not the time for marshalling historic facts. But I may be permitted to quote just one fact which may illustrate the difference in aspect between the spiritual problem of Judaism in Palestine and outside of Palestine. The years 1881-1882—the years of the Russian pogroms, of which today we may happily speak with a smile—marked the beginning of two simultaneous movements within Russian Jewry:

nearly two and a half million Jews came to America; less than one hundred thousand went to Palestine.

Now we certainly have no right to complain about all that has happened to us in this country. We are filled with gratitude to Almighty God and filled with gratitude to the American people that we have been granted to develop as freely and to prosper as greatly as we have. Indeed, we have now become the hope and refuge of the Jewry of the world in its hour of distress.

But spiritually our progress has been slow. We are only now beginning to emerge from our state of dependence, and for many years to come all our efforts will be focused on the preservation and adaptation of Judaism within the American environment.

What has happened in the meantime in Palestine? Only a handful of Jews went to the Holy Land, less than may be found on some of the Jewish streets on the East Side. But with what result? In one generation they have managed to establish forty Jewish settlements, in which they have evolved a new form of Jewish self-government, a self-government without an army, without a police, without jails and without coercion—and without a single robbery and without a single murder in the course of thirty-five years.

In the lands of the Dispersion, the Jews speak every language of civilized and uncivilized humanity, with one exception—their own language. Many attempts have been made outside of Palestine, where there are hundreds of thousands of Jews who understand Hebrew, to make the Hebrew language again

a spoken language. But all these attempts have failed. In Palestine, however, one man arose, single-handed —he is at the present time with us in New York, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda—and in less than half a generation he performed a miracle that stands entirely alone in the annals of human speech: he resurrected a language, which has not been spoken for over two thousand years, from the dead, and thus made true the contention of the psalmist that strength has been ordained out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

In the lands of the Dispersion we have hundreds of Jewish artists, many of them prominent in their field, and yet we constantly debate whether there is a Jewish art—and many deny it. But in Palestine a single man again, Boris Schatz, came and established the Bezalel, and laid at least the foundation for a Jewish art.

And who knows? Palestinian Jewry is only at the beginning, or rather at the beginning of the beginning. In the course of time it is bound to find itself. It will throw off the shackles of the Golus and the influences of the Golus which still fetter its spirit. It will take up the historic thread where it was dropped two thousand years ago, and perhaps if not we then our children may live to see the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Law shall come forth out of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

But the significance of Palestine for the Jewries of the world lies still in another direction: it is the symbol of Israel's unity. We believe in *Ahduth Yisroel*, in the unity of Israel. We speak of the *Kelal Yisroel*, the community of Israel, and some of

the gentlemen sitting on this platform have certainly done yeoman's work in the practical realization of this great ideal. But who can say that the unity of Israel is an actual unity? Unity means unity of purpose, unity of hope; it means co-operation, give and take, equality and fellowship. But since the days of Jewish emancipation, Israel's unity consisted in the endeavor of the emancipated half to give succor to the unemancipated half.

All the international organizations in Jewry are established for one purpose, to give help, but not to co-operate. The *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, the "Jewish Colonization Association," the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*, and other agencies of the same category, are all striving for emancipation, not beyond emancipation. There is one exception, and that international Jewish organization, which I have no need to mention, is devoted to the realization of the Jewish ideal in Palestine.

The *Alliance Israelite Universelle* calls itself in Hebrew *Kol Yisroel Haverim*, "all Israel are Comrades;" its symbol is a pair of clasped hands. But both the name and the symbol misrepresent the actual relationship between the various Jewries of the world. The Jews are *Ahim le-tzareh*, "brethren in distress;" but they are not *Haverim*, comrades, working shoulder to shoulder for a common goal. And their hands are not clasped. Their symbol should rather be a pair of hands that are open: the one to give help, the other to receive help. It is not a unity of happiness, but a unity of misery; it is a unity of sympathy, in the orginal meaning of the

word, which signifies "fellow-suffering." In the dark middle ages, when the nations and the countries of the world were widely removed from one another, the unity of Israel was far more comprehensive and far more firmly established than it is today, in the age of steam, electricty and aeroplanes.

What do we, the Jews of America, know of the Jews of the world, know specifically of the Jews of the eastern part of the world, except that they are starving? What do we know of the great Jewry of Russia, to which we extend a helping brotherly hand? What do we know of their life outside of the fact of their being hungry? Do we, who most of us are the descendants of Russian Jewry, know anything of what Russian Jewry has been thinking, and dreaming, and hoping, and planning, or of the great cultural activities which are more vigorous in Russian Jewry than perhaps in any other Jewry of the world?

What we need is a true unity, a unity based on liberty, a unity based on co-operation, and there is no nobler unity than that of a common ideal, the ideal which has tonight found expression on this platform—a genuine Jewish life on a genuine Jewish soil. A portion of our people settled in the Holy Land will prove a focus which will gather the efforts of all the Jewries of the world, and it will prove at the same time a power-house which will send forth its energies to the whole house of Israel. This, and only this, will be *Ahduth Yisroel*, "unity of Israel," in the true sense of the world.

And at no other time were we so much in need of this unity as we are today, when the process of

emancipation which is the basis for all our international Jewish endeavors is nearing its completion. A great and happy family event is taking place in the household of Israel. It is the marriage of our big sister, the Jewry of Russia, to the great Russian people. Before the period of emancipation, the household of Israel was like a large family of sisters, living under a lowly roof, within narrow walls, surrounded by poverty and privation, but all united in one common love, because in the midst of them was dwelling their beloved mother Zion, wrinkled, aged, and yet eternally youthful. They were happy in their unity, they were happy in their affection.

Then came emancipation, and one after the other the sisters began to leave their home to join the larger life of the world around. And the married daughters sometimes forgot their old mother and the sisters they had left behind. They would send an occasional contribution towards the upkeep of the old home, but, absorbed by their new duties and fascinated by new attractions, they would care but little for what was going on within its walls.

But now the event of events has arrived. Our biggest sister, the one that has remained longest in the house, has come into her own. She has been called out to go and to share the new and larger life of the great Russian people. And all the sisters, gathered once more in the family circle, rejoice in her joy, and are happy in her happiness. But their happiness, like all happiness, is tinged with sadness. They think of what happened to themselves, and they come and say to her: "Sister, dear, you have been the

mainstay of our family longer than any of us. You have been stauncher in your loyalty to our dear old mother than any of us. Now a happy life is before you, and we wish you happiness with a full heart. But, pray, do not forget our old home, and the sisterly bond that united us. And, above all, do not forget our old mother, whom we all love and who loves us all with a great and abiding love."

And Russian Jewry, the big sister, who has been the central pillar of the House of Israel for the last five hundred years, who has kept fresh the love of Zion in the heart of the Jewish people, half laughing, half crying, raises her hand and solemnly repeats the oath of the psalmist:

Im eshkakhech, Yerushalaim, tishkakh yemini!
"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning!
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I remember thee not!"

Im lo a'ale eth-Yerushalaim al rosh simhathi.
"If I set not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy!

XXVII

PALESTINE AND THE WORLD WAR*

JUDAH HALEVI, the great Jewish thinker and poet, is responsible for the saying that "Israel is the heart among the nations," because, owing to the peculiar position which the Jews occupy in the world, they react with double intensity both upon the painful and the pleasurable sensations of life. The soul-stirring experiences through which we have passed together with our fellow-citizens, since we met in annual convention last year, have affected us Jews in a double manner. They have affected us as part and parcel of the nations in whose midst we live and in whose ranks we fight; and they have affected us as members of the scattered Jewish people throughout the world. A year ago when we were assembled at the Eighth Annual Convention of the Kehillah we had occasion to rejoice in the wonderful change that had taken place in Russia. We all hoped that the sun of liberty which had emerged out of the darkness of Czardom would bring righteousness and healing in her wings to all the hapless inhabitants of the Russian Empire and to the doubly hapless Russian Jews. Today that sun seems to be swallowed up by heavy and stormy clouds, and all we can do is to hope for the best.

*Address delivered at the Ninth Annual Convention of the Jewish Community (Kehillah) of New York, June 2, 1918, introducing a resolution of thanks to the British Government for the Balfour Declaration.

But it would seem as if Providence had wished to compensate us for our disappointment in Russia by raising a new hope for us in an entirely different part of the globe—in the land of our fathers. The second day of November of the year 1917 will stand forth as a lofty landmark in the history of the Jewish people. For it was on that day that the Government of Great Britain, subsequently joined by the governments of other great powers, publicly declared that they "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." It is for the first time in nearly two thousand years, ever since the Jews were driven from their home by the Roman legions, that a great Government has recognized the right of the Jewish people to be a people, and the claim of Palestine to be *Eretz Yisroel*, the Land of Israel.

Our gratitude for this noble act is deepened by the conviction that the British Declaration was not the outcome of political expediency, nor the generous impulse of a successful conqueror, but a manifestation of that large-hearted policy which modern England has always pursued toward our people. The same England which has made its Jewish citizens feel so thoroughly at home has also shown a fine understanding of the historic yearning of the Jewish people to have a home of its own. It was the great English poet who sang so pathetically of the homelessness of the Jew, in those famous words:

The wild dove hath her nest,
The fox his cave,
Mankind their country,
Israel the grave.

And it was the English Government which has always lent a willing and attentive ear to the proposals that bade fair to put an end to that homelessness. It is not accidental that out of England came forth that great Jew and philanthropist Moses Montefiore, who made the first attempt at the restoration of Palestine. Nor is it accidental that it was an Englishman, Sir Lawrence Oliphant, who, with the approval and encouragement of the leading English statesmen of the time, made another effort in 1879 to secure Palestine for the Jews. Those of us who are associated with the Zionist movement can never forget that it was the British Government which was the first to recognize the validity and earnestness of the Zionist aspirations, and on two occasions made concrete endeavors to realize them. It was in 1903 that Great Britain expressed its willingness to set aside the region of Al-Arish on the Palestine-Egyptian frontier for a Jewish settlement, and when that plan proved economically unfeasible the British Government made another offer, placing a portion of its East African Protectorate at the disposal of the Jews. At the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, the Zionists, though gratefully appreciating the noble intentions of Great Britain, declined this proposal which implied disloyalty to their ancient homeland. And Great Britain, instead of being discouraged or displeased by this refusal, entered so intimately into the most delicate sentiments of the Jews that it has requited their loyalty by now offering them the land of their desire. Great Britain has shown herself to be truly Great—not merely *Big* Britain because it happens to control one-fifth of the

globe, but rather *Great* Britain—because true greatness consists in the mercy of the strong for the weak, and in the recognition of the claims of humanity.

However, the most effective way to express gratitude is not by words but by deeds. If we truly wish to show our appreciation of the opportunity which England has granted to us, then the only way to do it is by taking full and unrestricted advantage of that opportunity, and by bending all our efforts to the end that the promise made to us may soon become fulfillment. It is the duty of the Jews all over the world to react directly and concretely upon the offer of the British Government, and to help carry it into effect.

And on no other section of the Jewish people does this obligation rest so fully and so sacredly as it does upon the Jews of America. For, as a result of the great World War, and even more directly as a result of the events of last year which have brought about the disintegration of the House of Israel in Russia, the Jewry of America has suddenly become the leading Jewry of the world. We are now first by the sheer weight of numbers, and we are certainly first by dint of our resources. We are now the largest Jewry in the world, and this position places great obligations upon us: obligations towards ourselves in this country and obligations towards our fellow-Jews in other lands. It is our first duty as Jews and as Americans to establish our life in America on such foundations that it may fully harmonize with the environment in which we live, and with the traditions of the Jewish people of which we are a part.

It is our duty to see to it that the Jewish community of our own city, which harbors one-half of American Israel and one-tenth of universal Israel, shall become a fountain-head of strength and inspiration to ourselves and our neighbors.

But our next duty is to our brethren in other lands. The Jews of America must realize that the entire Jewish world looks to us for help and encouragement; that American Jewry is looked upon as the big brother of scattered Israel. Whether it be in Poland or Lithuania, in Greece or in Turkey, in far-off Persia or Japan, our sympathy and support are the only ray of hope in the darkness which has engulfed our brethren. But of all these countries Palestine has a specially tender spot in our hearts, because, in appealing to our sentiments of pity, it stirs at the same time the deeply imbedded lofty associations of our history.

The history of Palestine is, indeed, not a history but a romance. It is the love story of the Jewish people and of its undying devotion to its ancient homeland from which it has been separated for well-nigh two thousand years. Today we witness the consummation of that romance, which, like all mediaeval romances, is celebrated amidst the clash of arms. Palestine is designated in the Bible by a characteristic romantic term: it is called *Eretz Ha-Tzevi*, "the Land of Beauty," and those who have had the privilege of seeing Palestine with their eyes testify that this description is true to the facts. Palestine is indeed a Beauty, a Sleeping Beauty.

I hope you remember the story of Sleeping Beauty. It is the story of a beautiful princess who was cursed

by an ugly witch and cast into a sleep which lasted for a hundred years. The whole castle in which the princess lived went to sleep with her, and thorns and thistles shut the castle from the eyes of the world. But after a hundred years there came the prince who, in his search for the princess, found his way to the castle, and, cutting a road through the briars and brambles of a century's growth, finally reached the chamber in which the princess lay—so beautiful, but alas! so lifeless. However, no sooner had the prince pressed his lips upon the princess than Sleeping Beauty awoke. She opened her eyes, and, stretching her limbs, jumped down from her couch, full of youth and vigor, and the castle and its inmates rose to new life with her.

The Princess is Palestine. The Prince is Israel. I do not know whether the role of England is that of the *Schadchen* or *Mechuton*—the marriage-broker or father-in-law. But what we do know is that the wedding between the Princess and the Prince is going to take place shortly, and that it is the duty of all of us who love that couple and wish to see them happy to provide the wedding expenses. Those of us who have been reared in old-fashioned Jewish tradition know that the precept of *Hakhnassath Kallah*, enjoining upon us to provide a home for the bride, is classed among the fundamental duties of our religion, and carries a special appeal to every Jewish heart. Only a little while ago the Zionists, prompted by similar motives, issued an appeal for the Restoration Fund, the first installment of which, amounting to $1,000,000, is now being rapidly collected. But we are only at the beginning of our endeavors. American Jews, together

with the Jews all over the world, will have to continue their generosity until the dream which our fathers dreamt when they sat weeping by the rivers of Babylon has become a reality, and until the union of the People of Israel with the Land of Israel has again been consummated. If the history of Palestine be like a fairy tale, then it is for us to convert this fairy tale into a fact, for, as Dr. Herzl said at the beginning of the Zionist movement: "If you so desire, then it is no fairy tale."

However, when we speak of the restoration of Palestine as the consummation of our Jewish aspirations we are not actuated by narrow, Jewish self-interest. It is a paradoxical fact, and nevertheless a true fact, that Palestine, which has the strongest appeal to the specific national sentiments of the Jew, is at the same time the most, or rather the only, international land on the surface of the earth. And it is so, not because of its size, for it is one of the smallest of countries; nor because of its material resources, which it possesses to a very limited degree; but because it is the fountain-head of those great ideals towards which humanity is struggling today, in the midst of rivers of blood. We Jews love Palestine, not because it tickles our political ambitions, or allures us with material prospects, but because we fervently hope that those great ideals which were proclaimed in ancient Palestine thousands of years ago may once more be realized in modern Palestine, not only for the benefit of the Jews, but as an object-lesson for the whole of humanity. "For out of Zion shall come forth the Law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem."

The British Declaration offering Palestine to a people whose claims are not based on might but on right, is in itself an earnest of the approaching triumph of those great ideals. For if this war means anything it is the conviction that right stands above might; that the things of the spirit are above brutal, physical power. It is the vindication of justice and righteousness; the vindication, therefore, of the smaller nationalities, and the securing of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness not only to the individuals, but also to the groups of the human race. It is precisely for this purpose that our own country has entered the struggle. America has nothing to gain by way of political or material aggrandizement from her participation in this war. The country which has been slandered as the land of the almighty Dollar, and praised as the country of unlimited opportunities is willing to stake the lives of her children and the material prosperity with which she has been blessed for no other purpose than that the ideals first proclaimed in ancient Palestine may prove victorious.

This ideal connection between Palestine and the World War has never been more loftily conceived and more forcibly expressed than it was by the Prophet Isaiah 2,700 years ago, in those famous chapters (x-xi), in which, on the one hand, he describes the initial conquests and ultimate defeat of mighty Assyria, and, on the other hand, pictures the rise and growth of rejuvenated Palestine.

Assyria, heir to an ancient civilization which we still admire on her monuments, and conspicuous by her achievements in art, literature and science, was seized by the desire for world conquest. She marches

through the fields of Western Asia and she says—I am now quoting literally the words of the Prophet:

"By the strength of my hand I have done it,
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
In that I have removed the boundaries of the peoples,
And I have robbed their treasures,
And I have brought down like a mighty one the inhabitants;
And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples;
And as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken,
Have I gathered all the earth."

You can hear the tramping tread of her marching armies, which are coming nearer and nearer:

"He is come to Aiath,
He is passed through Migron;
At Michmas he layeth up his baggage;
They are gone over the pass;
They have taken up their lodging at Geba;
Ramah trembleth;
Gibeath-shaul is fled.
Cry thou with a shrill voice, O daughter of Gallim!
Hearken O Laish! O thou poor Anatoth!
Madmenah is in mad flight;
The inhabitants of Gebim flee to cover.
This very day shall he halt at Nob,
Shaking his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem."

But at the very height of her triumph, Assyria is struck down by a deadly blow:

"Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts,
Shall lop the boughs with terror;
And the high ones of stature shall be hewn down,
And the lofty shall be laid low,
And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron
And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."

But out of the crashing noise of the falling cedars of Lebanon there suddenly breaks upon our ear a soft and tender voice, even as in a symphony orches-

tra the sweet sound of a flute is sometimes heard floating above the crash of cymbals:

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse,
And a twig shall grow forth out of its roots,

—a tender sapling, instead of the haughty cedar.

And this "twig" will not be endowed with brutal force or military efficiency:

"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and courage,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

And his symbol shall not be the mailed fist nor the peaked helmet:

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

And human beings shall no more tear one another like wild beasts:

"And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them. . . .
They shall not hurt nor destroy
In all My holy mountain;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea."

Palestine is the land of Promise not only to the Jew but to the entire world—the promise of a higher and better social order.

Upon the gates of the Third Jewish Commonwealth will be inscribed the same prophetic words which greeted the establishment of the Second Jewish Commonwealth:

"Not by might, nor by power,
But by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

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